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FABINHO

BEST GAME, TOUGHEST OPPONENT, FUNNIEST TEAM-MATE, FAVOURITE SCOUSE EXPRESSION, ALL-TIME FOOTBALL LEGEND AND HIS WORLD CUP DREAM WITH BRAZIL

Official main club partner of Liverpool Football Club





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EA7
Lete

BOBBY'S BALLET

Mid-air acrobatic back-heel which so nearly set up another memorable goal for Liverpool in the Champions League? Only Roberto Firmino... His near-assist came on 30 minutes in the final group game against Napoli at Anfield but the ensuing header from Curtis Jones was just too high.




BORN IN THE 90'S.
The New Nike Flight Ball.
NIKE
OFFICIAL MATCH BALL OF THE PREMIER LEAGUE
2022 - 2023
Premier League



NO CONTEXT MIGHTY RED



CORNER TAKEN QUICKLY

Just like Barcelona in 2019, the page where you don't know what to expect...

LFC AROUND THE HOME XI

Scott Carson the DRIVEWAY
Jan KromLAMP
Gary TABLEtt
BATHaniel Phillips
Brian KETTLE
Jan DØLBY SURROUND SOUND
STOVE McMahon
Jamie BEDknapp
Peter COUCH
Mario BaloTELLY
DarWINDOW Nunez
Subs: Jerzy DuDECKING,
VeGARDEN Heggem,
CHAIRlie Adam, Emile DESKey,
DivCLOCK Origi.

OUR LADS HAVE COME FROM ALL OVER THE PLACE

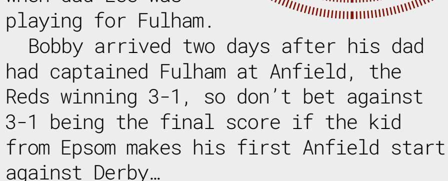
Bobby Clark (Epsom, England)

Epsom is 13.5 miles south of central London, but that's nothing to be Surrey about. Known as Ebesham in the 10th century, it has been inhabited by humans since the mid-Bronze age but is more famous for horses.

Organised horse-racing has taken place on Epsom Downs since the early 17th century with two of the classics – The Oaks and The Derby – established there in 1779 and 1780 respectively.

The Derby, named after founder the Earl of Derby, had an attendance of 127,000 in 1843 and became known as a way of describing important sporting contests between rivals, hence the use of 'derbies' in football. It was also in the 1913 Derby (at Epsom, not Anfield or Goodison), where suffragette Emily Davison was killed when hit by King George V's horse and where the season two finale of *Peaky Blinders* was set.





Tommy Shelby wasn't born in Epsom, but Bobby Clark was in February 2005 when dad Lee was playing for Fulham.

Bobby arrived two days after his dad had captained Fulham at Anfield, the Reds winning 3-1, so don't bet against 3-1 being the final score if the kid from Epsom makes his first Anfield start against Derby...

BEST EXCUSE FOR MISSING TRAINING OF THE SEASON

"My dog Biscuit decided to go into labour and had seven healthy puppies."
Gilly Flaherty

RANDOM CHANT OF THE MONTH

Steven Gerrard is our captain,
Steven Gerrard is a Red,
Steven Gerrard plays for Liverpool,
A Scouser born and bred.



NOT THE ONLY TIME CANCELO COULDN'T GET THE BALL OFF MO

BLAGGING IT

This page has gone to the dogs this month but will you be left barking up the wrong tree trying to work out which fact about LFC Women boss Matt Beard's pooch is true?

- *Matt Beard called the dog he got off Gilly Flaherty 'Jürgen' after his fellow Liverpool manager.*
- *Matt Beard called the dog he got off Gilly Flaherty 'Rex' as it is latin for King.*
- *Matt Beard called the dog he got off Gilly Flaherty 'Prenton' because Liverpool Women play home games at Prenton Park.*

Answer: Jürgen and Prenton would be great names for a canine, but Matt Beard called his dog Rex, although we don't know if he speaks Latin!. Woof luck if you got it wrong and grrrrreat work if you got it right.

GONE IN 30 SECONDS (QUICKEST LFC GOALS)

Secs	Player	Versus
14	Paul Walsh	West Ham (1984)
15	Dave Hickson	Derby (1961)
15	Naby Keita	Huddersfield (2019)
20	Chris Lawler	Sunderland (1966)
21	Kenny Dalglish	Everton (1985)
27	Jimmy Melia	Bury (1961)
27	Tony Hateley	Wolves (1967)
27	Joe Cole	Steaua Bucharest (2010)
29	Robbie Fowler	Middlesbrough (1996)



WHY IT WAS OK TO MISS TRAINING TO DELIVER 7 PUPPIES

"Matt Beard knew she was pregnant – he took one of the boys and his sister took one of the girls."
Gilly Flaherty



Words: Chris McLoughlin

NORTH AND SOUTH

It's been seven years since Joe Gomez swapped London for Liverpool and in that time he's experienced ups and downs aplenty but matured into a top-class centre-half

Born in Lewisham and raised in Catford, defender Joe Gomez grew up 'south of the river' as they say in London. He isn't the only high-profile footballer to come from that compass-point of the capital. Jadon Sancho, Michail Antonio, Tammy Abraham, Declan Rice and Ademola Lookman are five others. Indeed, in 2020 a total of 14 per cent of English-born Premier League players came from 10 square miles of South London, making it one of European football's biggest hotbeds for talented young footballers – and, like Liverpool, one with its pockets of deprivation.

Joe, who went to Forest Hill School, played Power League five-a-side football while at primary school before getting involved in the Sunday league scene. His team was Lewisham Youth, but it was when he was representing county sides Blackheath District and London County that he was scouted by Charlton Athletic and ended up at the Addicks' Academy.

It was there where he met Nkemjika Eka, another aspiring young player from South London. But whereas Gomez focused on his football and began a professional career that has seen him win the Premier League and Champions League among other honours, Eka was sucked into gang life and his career fell by the wayside.

The different directions their lives went in was featured on *South of the River* – a three-park documentary first aired on BT Sport in November 2021 which is also available on Netflix. Twelve months on, Gomez has been reflecting on the documentary and his time as a young footballer in London.

"It means a great deal to me as it was the main part of my journey and sort of made me who I am," he says. "It was really nice to see a light shone on South East London as a whole because I know how much talent there is there.

"It showed other players who come from the same area and that was nice to see. The area was everything for me growing up and obviously I'm grateful to my parents and so on for guiding me in the right direction.



"I CAN DEFINITELY SAY IT'S BEEN THE BEST FIVE YEARS OF MY LIFE. I'VE HAD SOME TOUGH TIMES, BUT THEY'VE HELPED SHAPE ME AND I WOULDN'T HAVE WANTED TO SPEND THEM, GOOD OR BAD, ANYWHERE ELSE"

"That sort of culture and things that were shown in the documentary definitely created my mindset, my desire to play football and my love for football. It was a massive part of my childhood for sure."

Joe was 17 when he made his Charlton Athletic debut and 18 when he signed for Liverpool in 2015. The Reds weren't the only club to show an interest in signing him, but his Gambia-born father Augustus revealed in an interview in 2020 that, as a family, they felt Liverpool was the right fit.

"When all these clubs were chasing Joseph, as parents we made sure we analysed Chelsea, who had 27 players on loan and eleven internationals," he said.

"Man United also, we looked at them and knew it would be difficult at the time. For Arsenal, Arsene Wenger was there and we knew it was going to be hard for Joe to play there, and we looked at Liverpool and knew he would progress there. It was the right decision."



Initially playing at left-back under Brendan Rodgers, the young defender had a spell at right-back under Jürgen Klopp before establishing himself in his preferred centre-half position. Serious injuries disrupted his Anfield career, but in the second half of season 2019/20 he established himself as first-choice centre-back and played in 28 of the 38 Premier League games as the Reds ended a 30-year wait to be champions of England.

"I came here when I was 18 and I didn't really know anything other than the little bubble in South East London," he said after lifting the Premier League trophy. "I didn't ever imagine how big the club could be and what impact it could have on my life.

"I can definitely say it's been the best five years of my life. I've had some tough times, but they've helped shape me and I wouldn't have wanted to spend them, good or bad, anywhere else."

Alongside him in all of those games was Virgil van Dijk and with the pair having now played almost 100 times in the same Liverpool team – the 1-0 defeat at Nottingham Forest was the 97th occasion they had played together – Gomez reveals that he sees the big Dutchman as "a big brother.

"It is nice to go onto the pitch with him, but with all our team-mates we have a close relationship and it feels like we're playing for one another.

"We obviously communicate off the pitch and you like to think that carries over. Things aren't always straightforward, but we definitely do our best for one another and for the team. That's the main thing."

The pair also started season 2020/21 as Klopp's preferred central defensive partnership, but both had their campaigns ended prematurely through injury – Van Dijk in September 2020 and Gomez two months later. Losing both players significantly derailed Liverpool's season but brought Joe and Virgil closer together as they went through their rehabilitation at the same time.

"We both went through a tough time through injury and had questions for each other," says Gomez. "It's hard because no-one else is in your shoes and they weren't exactly the same injuries. I'd had the same sort of injury he had before, but [usually] there's no-one else you can relay the same messages to. Because we had surgery at the same time and we had the same simple struggles it was nice to share that with someone who was going through it at the same time.

"At the other end of the process it was coming back, figuring things out again about how your body is different and getting his view on how he felt. That was a constant process that we could do with each other and it definitely made us closer. I'll never forget the difficulties of it."

The difficulties the Redmen have encountered in 2022/23 isn't something Gomez is hiding from – during an interview in the Liverpool v Napoli matchday programme he admitted "there have been tough conversations in the dressing-room" – but it is also important not to lose sight of the bigger picture.




NIKE

During the last half-decade he has played alongside a man widely regarded as one of the best centre-backs ever to play for Liverpool FC, making him perfectly placed to assess Virgil van Dijk's contribution to the club.

"In the modern day the game has evolved, but over the last five years Virg has set the precedent of all the attributes needed to tick every box for a centre-back. His stats show how important his presence has been for Liverpool.

"Physically he is obviously extremely blessed. He ticks every box from stature, to how dynamic he is, to pace and strength. He's had to put in the performances to get the reputation that he has, but having done so – and having that reputation for the last few years – dealing with that is not easy.

"He's obviously got a pivotal role, in the team and inside this building [the AXA Training Centre] and he carries it on his shoulders extremely well, so for me to draw a perspective from that is massive. He's done it for a great few years now and is always there, is always with us and while he had a tough setback, I saw how he dealt with that.

"He worked hard to come back to where he is at and I know how difficult that is. He's done that and shown again what he is capable of and how good he is. I can't speak highly enough of him."

"I'VE LEARNED LOADS FROM PLAYING ALONGSIDE VIRGIL. IT'S A MASSIVE BLESSING HAVING SOMEONE LIKE HIM TO LEARN FROM EVERY DAY. IT'S PART-AND-PARCEL OF BEING AT A CLUB LIKE THIS I GUESS, HAVING THE BEST PLAYERS, BUT FROM A PERSONAL STANDPOINT THERE ARE SO MANY THINGS ON A DAILY BASIS"

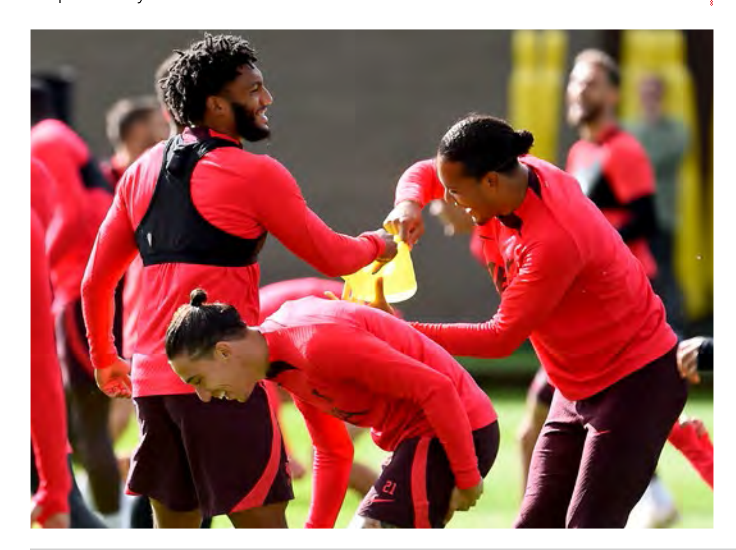


Virgil could yet become a World Cup-winning captain before Christmas as he leads the Netherlands' challenge in Qatar and his leadership skills have very much been a key part of Liverpool's success. When he hasn't played, some critics have suggested that the Reds lack a vocal presence in the backline and while Gomez admits that Van Dijk takes on that responsibility, he says communication is a two-way thing.

"Everyone sees that Virgil is obviously very dominant and very vocal. Generally he talks a lot and I listen to him, but it's also vice-versa. I have to try to communicate with him to try to make my life easier and his life easier.

"It's just simple things, like knowing where runs are from attackers, and it helps being able to communicate well. I think every team needs communication within the team to perform and in our team Virgil is one of the more vocal leaders and senior players so he takes that responsibility.





"I've learned loads from playing alongside him. It's a massive blessing having someone like him to learn from every day. It's part-and-parcel of being at a club like this I guess, having the best players, but from a personal standpoint there are so many things on a daily basis.

"How he applies himself in training, the way he handles pressure, the way he deals with the expectations that he's created for himself. There's a fine balance between letting that consume you and thriving off it, but I think that's something he does so well.

"Clearly he's created a platform for himself that shows he is one of the best to have done it in the Premier League and that's not easy to deal with on a day-to-day basis, so I draw a perspective from how he deals with things.

"From an actual football point-of-view, it's going on the pitch and seeing how he defends, seeing what he does in certain scenarios in certain games and how things change with different opponents.



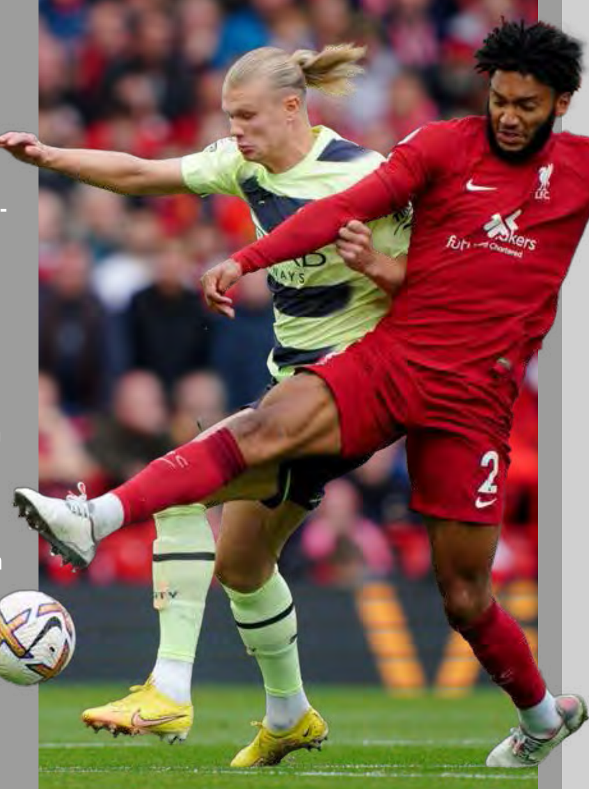
"BRILLIANT TO SEE"

BBC *MOTD2* pundit and former Arsenal and England defender Martin Keown was unstinting in his praise for Joe Gomez after Liverpool's win over Manchester City in the Premier League in October. He said: "It's four years since he and Virgil van Dijk were first paired together at centre-half for the Reds, when Gomez was 21. Back then, in November 2018, I said we might be seeing the start of one of the all-time great Premier League partnerships in central defence.

"We've been denied that because of the serious injury that Gomez suffered while training with England in November 2020, when he ruptured the patellar tendon in his left knee. I still always believed in Gomez, who has hardly played at centre-half since, but I knew it would take time for him to recover because I know that injury well [Keown suffered a partial tear of the same tendon on international duty back in 1992] and the saga that comes with it…

"Gomez only started four Premier League games last season, all of them at right-back, but he is an absolutely top-class centre-half and he showed it [against City]. He had the pace to deal with Erling Haaland, and the power in the air. He also had the desire and the confidence, now that his injury is behind him. That is great news for Reds boss Jürgen Klopp, and I think Gomez might also have answered some of Gareth Southgate's prayers before the World Cup.

"With this performance, he was back to his best. It was brilliant to see."



"AS A CENTRE-HALF I GREW UP WEARING NUMBERS FIVE AND SIX. GINI HAD FIVE AND NOW IBOU HAS FIVE AND THIAGO HAS SIX. WHEN I SWITCHED NUMBERS LAST SUMMER AT FIRST I DIDN'T HAVE TWO IN MIND BECAUSE IT'S A FULL-BACK NUMBER, BUT THEN IT JUST SEEMED LIKE A NICER NUMBER TO ME"



"I think he knows what I think of him because we're close and I'm not afraid to tell him that I'm grateful to have been around him as a player and a friend. Like I said, he's definitely like a big brother to me and I'm lucky to have been in his presence during these last few years."

Joe also sits a lot closer to Virgil in the dressing-room now having switched his shirt from no12 to no2 during pre-season. With Alisson wearing no1, Fabinho in no3 and Ibrahima Konate's name above no5, the central defensive spine of the Liverpool team have their lockers in a row, but it's got nothing to do with why Gomez switched numbers.

"The honest story is that we were in Austria and one of the other lads brought it up, saying we're in pre-season and it's a small window when you can do it [change number].

"Don't get me wrong, there was hesitation to begin with because of the association with number two and full-back. It's not that I don't enjoy playing there, but I've always said my preference is to play centre-half.

"As a centre-half I grew up typically wearing five and six. They were my go-tos. Gini [Wijnaldum] had five and now Ibou has five and Thiago has six, so I guess those are the ones that jump to mind.

"I didn't have two in mind because, like I say, it's traditionally a full-back number, so five would have probably been more relevant to me, but I appreciated wearing twelve as well. So there was that initial 'I'm not sure that's the route I want to go down'. But honestly, two was just a nicer number to me.

"I guess I've been here a while and maybe there was more to it that in time I'll be aware of – that I subconsciously wanted to make the change – but on the surface level it was just: why not?"

Did Liverpool's no66, Trent Alexander-Arnold, not fancy it? "Trent is Trent and if he'd have said, 'I wanna go two' there's no question, but it was there. I think it was Clyney [Nathaniel Clyne] who'd worn it previously and then it was free for a little while so I went for it."

With the switch being something of a spur-of-the-moment decision Joe was also keen to ensure that any Liverpool supporters who had already purchased a new 'GOMEZ 12' shirt from official club stores were not left out of pocket. Rather than having to peel a no1 off to turn 12 into 2, he paid for those affected to exchange their shirts for one with 'GOMEZ 2' on the back.





"I THINK OF THE CITY IN A WAY THAT NOW FEELS LIKE HOME BECAUSE OF THE TIME I'VE SPENT HERE. WHEN I FIRST CAME HERE HOME WAS LONDON, BUT LIVERPOOL IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE INGRAINED IN ME FOR LIFE BECAUSE OF MY ON-THE-PITCH AND OFF-THE-PITCH EXPERIENCES AND THE THINGS THAT I'VE GONE THROUGH HERE"

"I can't say it's common for me to do something off-the-cuff because I'm quite set in my ways," he admits, "but it was just one of those things that happened pretty quick.

"If I knew it was going to upset anyone I wouldn't have done it, but I didn't think my shirt sales would be anywhere near disrupting anything! I thought it would go under the radar and wouldn't be like Mo changing and causing an earthquake.

"It was only a small window to do it, but it was relatively close to when the new kits came out so it wouldn't have been fair if someone had bought one with a 12 and thought: I've got the wrong shirt now.

"So it was one of those things that seemed like the right thing and in the correlation of changing it was right that anyone who is nice enough to want my shirt got the new one with 2 on."

It means the kid from SE6 is now the LFC2 and while he will always be proud to be born and bred 'south of the river', Joe Gomez now sees Liverpool – north of the River Mersey – as home.

"I think of the city in a way that now feels like home because of the time I've spent here. When I first came here home was London, but Liverpool is always going to be ingrained in me for life because of my on-the-pitch and off-the-pitch experiences and the things that I've gone through here.

"I've been here a long time and Liverpool is home now. It feels that way."



OUR ALI

With the World Cup finals taking place this month it shouldn't go unmentioned that the best goalkeeper in the world happens to be a Liverpool player. Alisson Becker will be a formidable figure for Brazil's opponents to put the ball past and Joe Gomez isn't shy of praising the safest hands in the business.

"Maybe I'm biased but Alisson is the best for me. Ali sees everything on the pitch. He obviously reads the game, but it's hard to describe the impact of how much we use the goalkeeper in play. To have someone of his aura, the way he's calm and deals with pressure, has a massive impact on us because we feel like we can receive the ball from him and go back to him.

"Then there's the big moments: saves, keeping the ball, just doing what he does as a goalkeeper, and I've not seen anyone else come up for corners and cause the havoc that he does. He works so hard and he takes those moments and does it for the good of the team. He doesn't want to shine in glory, it's just who he is and he works hard.

"He's a great human being as well as being a great goalkeeper on the pitch, so for me he's the best around. That's my personal opinion, but he ticks every box for me."

RISE AND SHINE



When it's dark in the mornings and getting darker in the afternoons it's not always easy going to work...unless you happen to be heading to the AXA Training Centre for another day of high-quality, high-intensity football sessions with your LFC buddies





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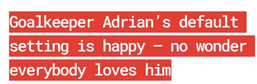


Curtis giving the ball a Kirkby stare



Man and ball in perfect harmony, that's our Ali





Goalkeeper Adrian's default setting is happy – no wonder everybody loves him



Darwin looking the part in the Champions League training kit

It's always left (white) boot on first for Thiago

Big Virl setting the pace while
Trent presses the snood button





Red Together

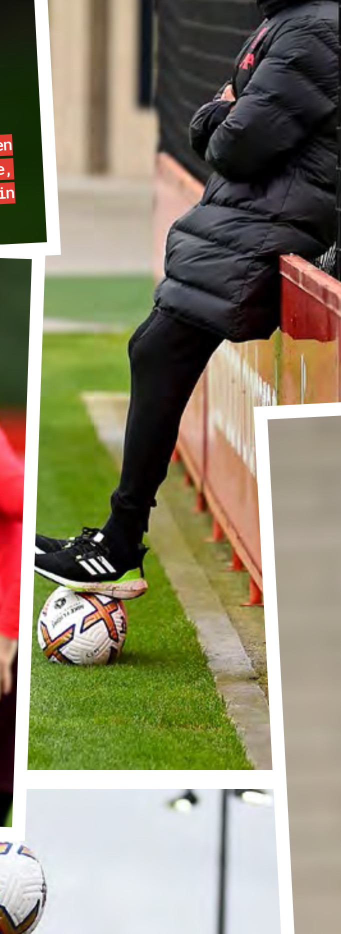
Our commitment to
champion equality, diversity and inclusion





Harvey's best Halloween face wasn't scaring anyone, least of all Darwin







Robbo takes a dive but VAR rules no pen

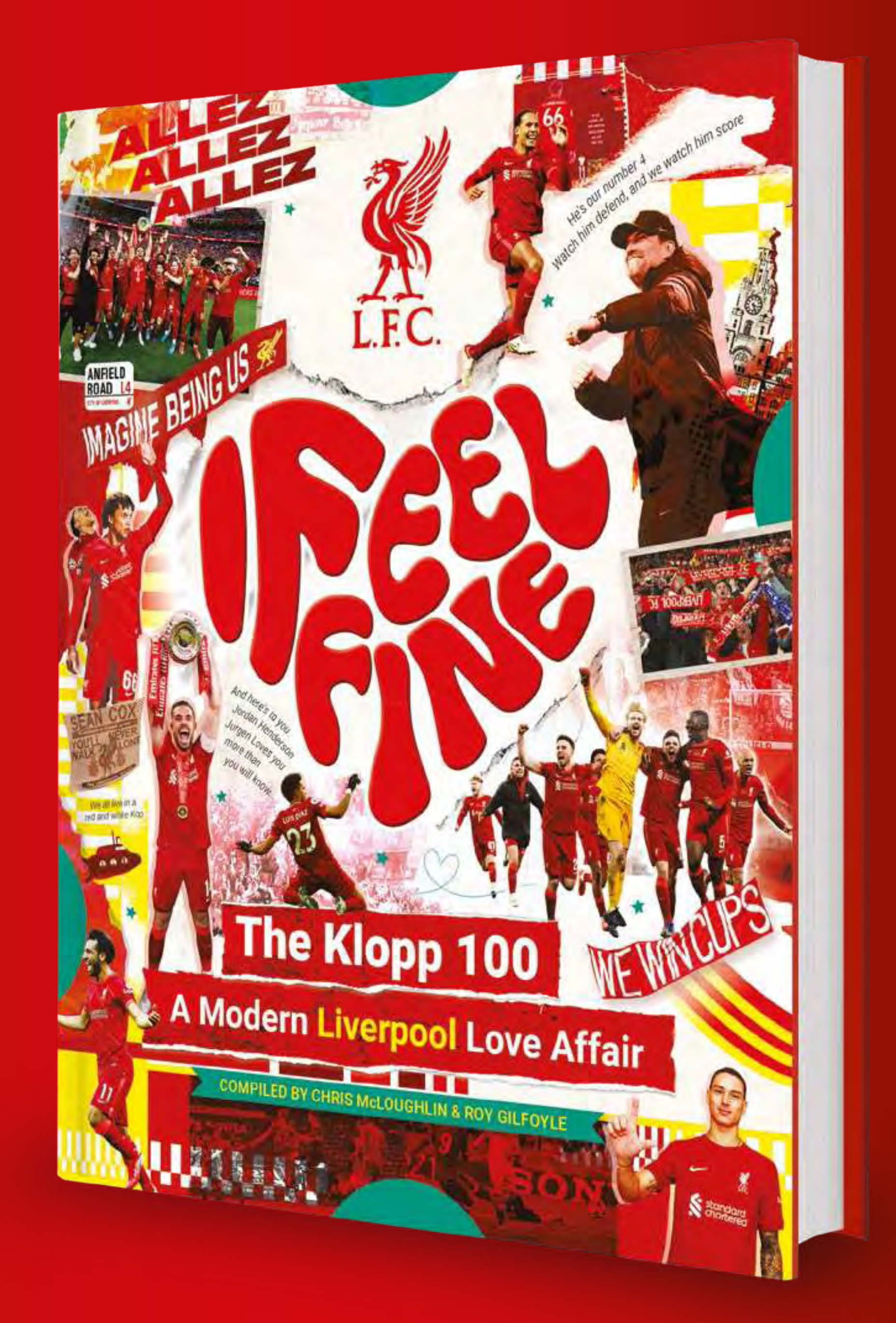
Alisson's header. Trent's corner. Bobby's no-look goals. Hendo's trophy shuffle...

Reliving 100 magical moments from the Klopp years

The bond between manager, players and fans has always been unique at Anfield and, seven years on from Jürgen's arrival, that special relationship is as powerful as it's ever been.

A new beautifully illustrated official club book, I Feel Fine celebrates the journey so far in 100 unforgettable, magical moments.

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10 OUT OF 10

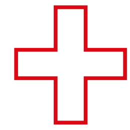
Words: Chris McLoughlin

The best moments from this season's Champions League group stage, from great goals to sensational support



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LUIS' CURLER V NAPOLI

...nest, a 4-1 defeat in Naples to equal ...Champions League defeat isn't going to ...ll the grandkids about, but supporting ...as always been about finding positives ... one in the shape of Luis Diaz.
...a lovely curler into the bottom corner, ...t ever scored by a Liverpool player in ...o Estadio Diego Armando Maradona – ...ct at the Reds' ultimate bogey ground ...ps restored a bit of confidence ahead ...hday 2 clash with Ajax.

THE AJAX FANS AT ANFIELD

'Singing don't worry, 'bout a thing. Cos every little thing gonna be alright'. Bob Marley's Three Little Birds – an Ajax anthem for almost 15 years now – rang out from the away end before kick-off and over the 90 minutes that followed the travelling Dutch supporters proved to be one of the best we've ever had at Anfield in the Champions League.

Instead of animosity, anti-Liverpool songs or the inappropriate chants that so many sets of away supporters sing, the Ajax fans simply supported their team. They were noisy throughout, having mingled freely with Reds in the city and outside Anfield before the match, and gave the Ajax players superb backing. Hopefully it won't be so long between drinks until we meet again.



JOEL'S WINNER V AJAX

Having looked dangerous from set-pieces all night but somehow having failed to convert any of them, it looked like the Reds would be held to a 1-1 draw by Ajax. Joel Matip had other ideas.

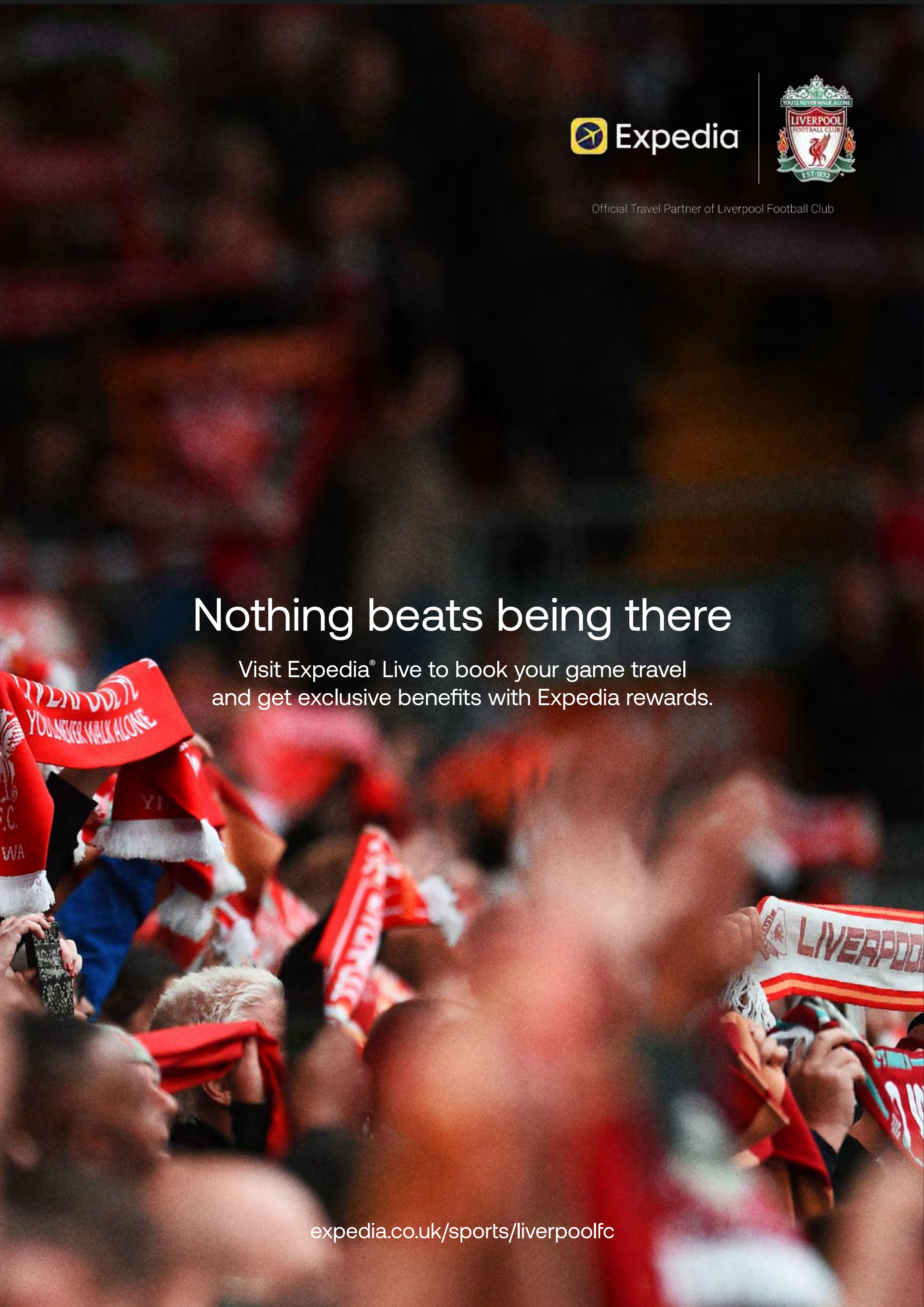
The big centre-half had never scored a Champions League goal for Liverpool before and when Dusan Tadic cleared his powerful 89th-minute header, from a Kostas Tsimikas corner, off the line the Kop wondered if that record would continue until referee Artur Dias felt his watch buzz to signal the ball had gone in and pointed to the centre-circle. Anfield erupted, Matip celebrated in front of joyous Kopites and Liverpool had a huge 2-1 win to get their Champions League campaign up and running.

TRENT'S FREE-KICK V RANGERS

The most talked-about full-back in football had endured a tricky weekend against Brighton having returned from England international duty without kicking a ball, but produced the perfect response when Rangers arrived at Anfield for the first competitive fixture between the Reds and Gers.

Only seven minutes had been played when Ben Davies fouled Darwin Nunez and up stepped Trent Alexander-Arnold to curl a glorious free-kick into the top corner.

On a night when Allan McGregor saved everything in open-play, it was a crucial opening goal and added to Trent's growing collection of fantastic free-kicks. Mo Salah completed a 2-0 win from the spot.


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BOBBY'S DOUBLE V RANGERS

While the scoreline will forever read Rangers 1 Liverpool 7 and the headlines went to a hat-trick hero, the value of Roberto Firmino's double at Ibrox cannot be underestimated. A goal down to Scott Arfield's 17th minute strike, it was Bobby's ability to get on the end of crosses from our full-backs that changed the game.

His equaliser was an almost casual near-post header from a Kostas Tsimikas corner before Firmino nutmegged Allan McGregor to put the Reds ahead after the break with a clinical left-footed finish from a Joe Gomez cross.

That was Bobby's 23rd Champions League goal for LFC – only Steven Gerrard, Mo Salah and Sadio Mane have got more – and it changed the game.

BOBBY'S ASSIST V RANGERS



In ten years' time, when Roberto Firmino has long hung up his boots and is probably wowing Brazilian audiences with his piano-playing or running a school for kung-fu goal celebrations, a video montage of all his assists for Liverpool will do the rounds on whatever social media looks like by then. And those who saw him in red, and those who didn't, will watch the highlights reel and think: What. A. Player.

His assist for Darwin Nunez to stroke home Liverpool's third goal at Ibrox was an outrageous yet deft rabona-style flick that was simply our Bobby at his very best.







MO'S HAT-TRICK V RANGERS

Only two Liverpool substitutes, Steve Staunton and Steven Gerrard, had ever scored hat-tricks after coming on from the bench and both hit their trebles at Anfield. So for Mo Salah to come on against Rangers and hit a treble away from home was a big achievement in itself, but to score his three goals at Ibrox in just six minutes and 12 seconds was simply sensational.

It was the 149th hat-trick in the Champions League since the European Cup was revamped in 1992/93, but nobody had stuck the ball in the net three times quicker than Mo.

HARVEY'S GOALS V RANGERS AND AJAX

Imagine being a teenage Liverpool supporter who scores in Champions League victories for the Reds away to Rangers and Ajax… You'd be afraid to pinch yourself in case you woke up, but if Harvey Elliott is reading this then don't fret lad – you really did live the dream at Ibrox and the Johan Cruyff ArenA.

Elliott had a bit of a wait for his first Champions League goal to be confirmed after an assistant referee ruled it out for offside, but a VAR check had the youngster jumping for joy when it was given to put the Reds 7-1 up at Rangers. And just for good measure he followed it up with a powerful drive into the roof of the net to seal a 3-0 win against Ajax in Amsterdam after Mo Salah had opened the scoring.

Whatever he achieves next, they were special moments in Elliott's flourishing Liverpool career.



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DARWIN'S HEADER V AJAX

At half-time the Ronny Rosenthal comparisons were being made on social media. Darwin Nunez had missed a sitter in Amsterdam on a night when Liverpool just happened to be wearing a similar shade of

to meet Andy Robertson's corner with a glancing header that flicked in off the inside of the post.



MO'S RECORD LEVELLER V NAPOLI

It was one of the scrappiest goals Mo Salah has scored during his entire Liverpool career, but they all count and this particular effort equalled a club record. Napoli were on an unbeaten run almost stretching back to when Mount Vesuvius last erupted, but when Kostas Tsimikas swung an 85th-minute corner into the box Darwin Nunez jumped like the floor is lava and powered a header goalwards. Napoli goalie Alex Meret just about scrambled the ball out before the whole of it was over the goal-line, but Salah reacted quickest to poke the ball past him.

It was Mo's 41st goal in European competition for LFC, equalling Steven Gerrard's club record, and he got there in half as many games (65) as Stevie G did (130). Salah's goal also condemned Napoli to a first defeat of the season, although Nunez nicked a 98th-minute goal off Virgil van Dijk just to make sure.




UEFA FOUNDATION



Ask FaB

Reds midfielder Fabinho recently answered a set of questions sent in to Sky Sports social accounts. Among them, ready for this, 'D'yer want some chicken lad'?



FAB, WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE EVER MOMENT IN A LIVERPOOL SHIRT?

My favourite moment, I think, is the game against Barcelona – the second game at Anfield. After losing the first game 3-0 we had to score four goals to go to the Champions League final. We were without two really important players so I think we played the perfect game and won 4-0.

The moments after the game were really special with the fans as well so I think this is the most special moment in a Liverpool shirt.

IT'S INTERESTING YOU SAID THE SEMI-FINAL AND NOT THE FINAL – IS THIS BECAUSE IT WAS AN INCREDIBLE COMEBACK?

Yes, it was after losing 3-0 to maybe the best team at that moment, Barcelona. So of course you have faith and hope to win the game to go to the final, but we knew it would be really hard to do it without Bobby and Mo. But we did it, so for me the result was really special and the moment after the game with players, staff and fans was really special.

It was something really special in my career – one of the best experiences in my football career.

TOUGHEST OPPONENT? MESSI. I ALWAYS WANTED TO PLAY AGAINST HIM TO SEE HOW HE IS ON THE PITCH. OF COURSE HE'S ONE OF THE BEST PLAYERS IN FOOTBALL HISTORY, BUT I ALWAYS WANTED TO SEE IF HE IS REALLY GOOD!

WHO IS THE TOUGHEST OPPONENT THAT YOU'VE EVER FACED?

Probably Messi. I always wanted to play against him to see how he is on the pitch. Of course, Messi is one of the best players in football history, but I always wanted to face him to see if he is really good [laughs]!

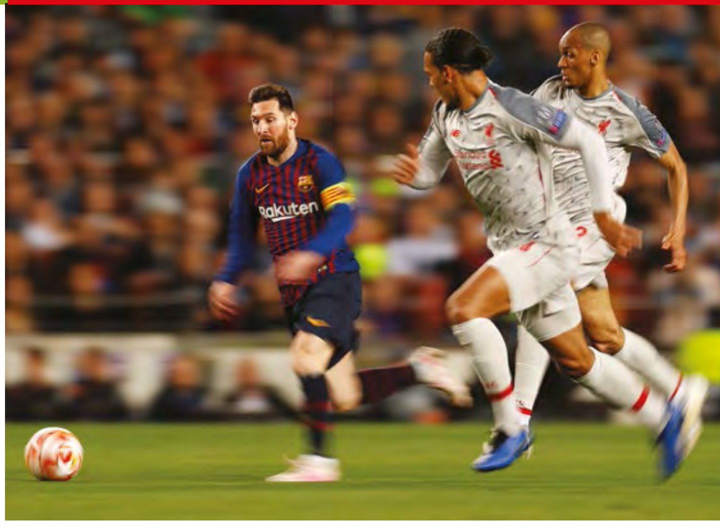
AND…?

He was really good! I think I have played against him three times and the first time he scored two goals at Camp Nou in the first game of the Champions League semi-final.

He wasn't really active in the game, but always when he had the ball he could do something different – a pass or an individual action for himself – and that's why this player doesn't need to be too much in the game. He didn't do too much but he scored two goals.

WHO IS THE BEST IN TRAINING FOR LIVERPOOL AND FOR BRAZIL?

I think Bobby Firmino for Liverpool and Brazil. Bobby is someone who works really hard, not just on the pitch but if you go into the gym before the sessions he will always be there.



He is a really good player and someone I always want to have in my team when we have the small games in the sessions.

I always want to have him in my team because Bobby's team is probably the winning team, so I would say Bobby Firmino.



WHO IS THE FUNNIEST PLAYER IN THE LIVERPOOL SQUAD?

Kostas Tsimikas, the 'Greek Scouser'. This guy is just crazy! He is always joking with everyone, he always looks happy and is the type of guy you want to have around you. He's a really nice guy who is always laughing and joking, and he's really loud!

When he's in the press room [talking to LFC's press officers] he's really peaceful and calm, but then he arrives [in the dressing-room] and he changes completely. He's a really nice guy who always looks to be happy so I will say him.

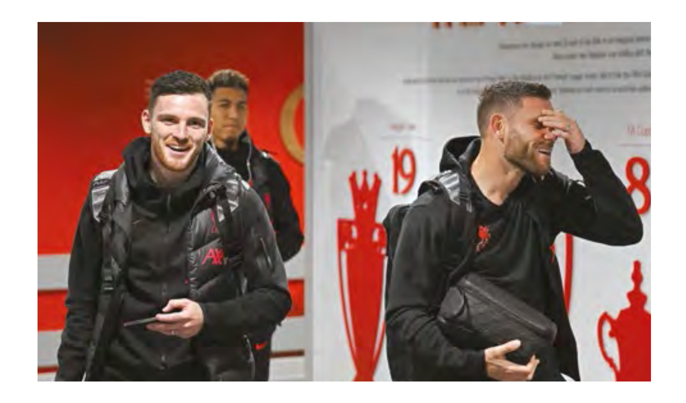
DO YOU SPEAK ANY SCOUSE?

Not really! I think people ask me because I put a video out saying something with a Scouse accent, but when you play at Liverpool you speak with guys like Curtis Jones regularly so you learn a little bit about the accent and some Scouse words as well.

Sometimes we joke about the accents and I think Kostas calls himself the 'Greek Scouser' because he does a lovely Scouse impression, much better than me!

OF ALL THE QUESTIONS THAT WERE SENT IN, THE QUESTION WE HAD THE MOST WAS 'DO YOU WANT SOME CHICKEN, LAD?'…

D'yer want some chicken, lad? [bursts into laughter]. That was when I was just answering some random questions on my Instagram. I think people really liked this video and after this people always comment on my posts about it. Even sometimes when kids see me they ask me. 'D'yer want some chicken lad'. I get it all the time!



CAN YOU UNDERSTAND ROBBO'S SCOTTISH ACCENT?

Yeah, for me Robbo's accent is the hardest to understand but of course after some years playing together now it is easier to understand. I wonder how he and Luis [Diaz] communicate during the games playing next to each other [laughs] because Robbo, to be honest, is the hardest one to understand.

WHO HAS THE BEST AND WORST FASHION SENSE AT LIVERPOOL?

The best I would say is Naby Keita. Lately Naby is dressing really well. The worst is hard to say as I have two good options! These guys are really good friends of mine, but Darwin [Nunez] and Kostas. They have their tastes in fashion but personally I don't like much of it! And I think the guys in the press room have the same opinion as me so maybe it's between them.



ISSUE 71 AND ALL THAT...

This magazine has a confession to make: we hadn't had Fabinho on the front cover since he signed from AS Monaco, way back in the summer of 2018, in Issue 71! It was in the aftermath of the Champions League final defeat to Real Madrid and inside he spoke of his ambitions at LFC, calling the Reds "giant of a team."

He described himself as "a player that can organise the game well for my team. I play with a lot of intensity and I'm quite strong in man-marking. Unfortunately, occasionally, I get some yellow cards for that, but I think that won't be a problem here. Hopefully I will have no difficulty in adapting to this type of football."

His mission was "to create my own history at this football club. Hopefully, on a personal level, I'm able to win titles with this club. I will try to grow and learn and improve myself, and to be part of the club's history."

One Champions League, one Premier League, one UEFA Super Cup, one FIFA Club World Cup, one League Cup and one FA Cup later, it's fair to say he's kept his promise.



WHICH BRAZILIAN LEGEND WOULD YOU HAVE LOVED TO HAVE PLAYED WITH?

Ronaldo. For me, after Pele, he is the best Brazilian player. I didn't see Pele play so that's why I say Ronaldo because I saw him playing and I saw him win a World Cup with Brazil and be the best player in the World Cup. He was a striker who was powerful and skillful so I would love to have played with him.

ARE YOU A GOOD CHEF AND WHAT IS YOUR FAVOURITE MEAL?

No! I cook nothing at all! My favourite is Brazilian food – feijoada. It is black beans and you put meat on it [usually pork and often with rice]. Brazilian food always has a lot of things on the table so I would have rice and salad with this. Feijoada is one of the most famous Brazilian plates, so I would say that.

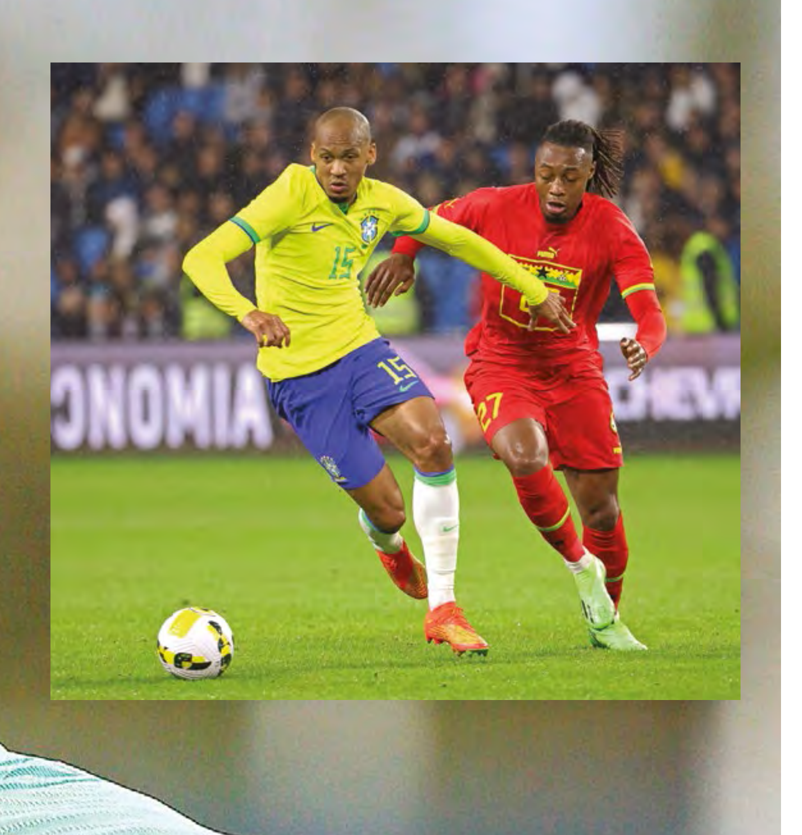
HOW MANY NICKNAMES HAVE YOU GOT?

In the dressing-room everybody calls me Flaco, which means skinny in English. Pep Lijnders called me 'The Lighthouse' because of the way I play and help the team and Joel Matip called me 'The Hoover' because in my position, number six, sometimes I have to clean things up. That's what I try to do so Joel calls me this sometimes, but Flaco is a shorter name than Fabinho so everyone calls me Flaco.

NAME ONE THING WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU…

Probably that my name is not Fabinho! My name is Fabio Tavares, but in Brazil we put 'inho' on every name so they started to call me Fabinho and it has stuck from football.

Now I prefer Fabinho, but I asked my mum what she prefers: Fabinho or Fabio? She said 'Fabinho', so I stayed with Fabinho.



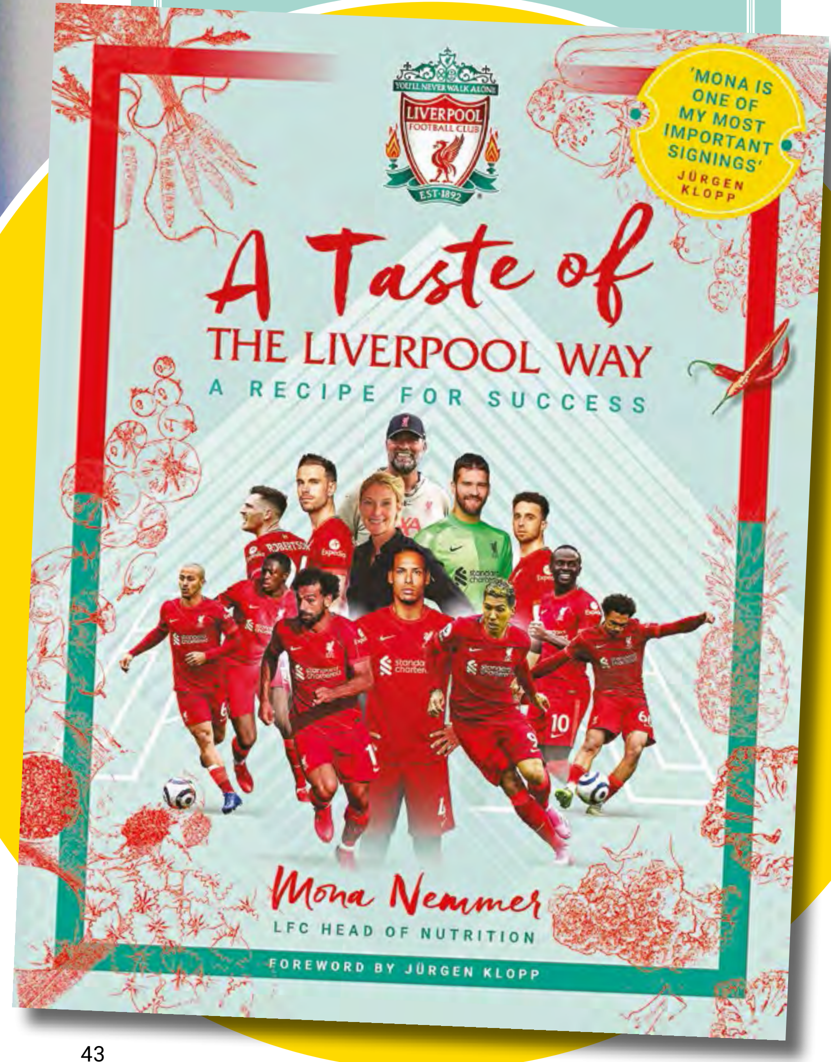
WHY GOOD FOOD MAKES FAB HAPPY

Fabinho was one of several players interviewed in the best-selling book by LFC head of nutrition Mona Nemmer, entitled *A Taste of the Liverpool Way*. In it he told readers all about the importance of a healthy, balanced diet for budding young footballers.

"I have learned a few things [about good food] and certainly a lot since the start of my career," he revealed. "Back then I didn't pay as much attention to what I ate or didn't think 100 per cent about healthy food, but now I try to eat much more healthily.

"Here at Liverpool we have a lot of variety in the kitchen and we appreciate how important a good diet is to keeping us fit and healthy. We are very lucky in that we have food which is freshly-prepared for us by the chefs. I tend to have quite a lot of rice but there is always a good choice available."

Fab also revealed that the best smell in a kitchen or canteen was "pancakes – I love it when I know we are having them!"



DO YOU PLAY ANY MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS?

No, nothing, but my wife plays the piano. I'm really bad at singing too!

FINALLY, WILL BRAZIL WIN THE WORLD CUP?

I hope so. I think Brazil has a really strong team, but not the strongest in the World Cup. I think France has the best squad, but Brazil is ready to fight for the World Cup. We have an experienced group and very experienced staff as well.

This will be the second World Cup playing with this manager [Tite] and this staff and the team is better, so hopefully this will be our World Cup.

ANFIELD UNCUT

The first seven Premier League games at home this season had it all: a shock sending-off, a dramatic late win, a six-goal thriller, a clash of the titans, a penalty-saving hero, and the end (ouch) of a record. As ever, the club's photographers captured the ambience and the excitement perfectly

FIRST NIGHT NERVES

Monday-night football. Among fans the jury is most probably out. Nevertheless on 15 August the Reds were forced to play catch-up in their first home game of the Premier League season as they welcomed Crystal Palace to Anfield for an 8pm kick-off and the last of the 'matchweek 2' round of fixtures. It proved to be an eventful evening, to say the least.

The sun had risen before 6am and wouldn't set until almost nine and it was t-shirts and shorts all around the ground, which looked resplendent in the late-summer sunshine prior to kick-off. But after weeks of extreme heat the weather-watchers had forecast thunderstorms across the country and half-an-hour into the match a few clouds had gathered above the majority of the 52,970 spectators inside. Having dominated the early exchanges, the hosts somehow found themselves a goal down when Eagles ace Wilfried Zaha raced clear on the counter-attack and slotted the ball past Alisson in front of the Kop.

The red-tinged rainbow took a while in coming but strangely it was the red card for Darwin Nunez, who'd earlier struck a post, which galvanised Liverpool as the ten men laid siege to the Palace goal. The equaliser came on the hour-mark from Luis Diaz, who cut inside from the left, weaved past five opponents and curled a beauty past Vicente Guaita.

It finished one-one. Despite the early-season optimism, it felt like an opportunity lost.









FOR THE RECORD

Five days after the defeat at Manchester United – another Monday-night mishap – came a chance to put things right at home to Bournemouth with a three o'clock kick-off on 27 August. Two points from the first three Premier League games, plus the news that there'd be a huge rise in energy bills for the whole country, failed to dampen the mood around Anfield as the Reds raced out of the blocks and went two up inside six minutes.

Luis Diaz opened the scoring with a header then Harvey Elliott – pictured on the programme front cover – fired home his first Premier League goal and was overcome with emotion as he dedicated the goal to his late grandmother.

Further goals from Trent Alexander-Arnold, Roberto Firmino and Virgil Van Dijk made it five-nil at the interval, and in the second half Cherries defender Chris Mepham scored an own-goal before Bobby and Luis each got their second either side of a fine Fabio Carvalho volley in front of the Kop. Amazingly Mo Salah failed to find the target although he did end up in the back of the net himself at one point!

Liverpool equalled the biggest win in Premier League history and a few days later Jürgen Klopp revealed he'd been asked for one word to describe the result. "The one I chose was simple: 'needed'… We have played four fixtures at the start of a season that everyone knows will be different. We would like to have more points on the board than we have and we are disappointed that we do not, but to be a work-in-progress at this stage is pretty normal, I would say."



KARMA BEFORE THE STORM

Maybe it's something about the kit colours of these two sides when they meet, especially at Anfield under the lights, which heightens the sense of theatre. But four days after the Bournemouth game, nobody was under any illusions that it'd be another walkover when Newcastle were in town. The evening also saw pacesetters Arsenal and Manchester City in action at home, plus a London derby between West Ham and Tottenham, but none of them could match this match for late drama.

Newcastle came with a plan to disrupt any Liverpool tempo and when they won the toss they switched ends so the hosts attacked the Kop in the first half for the first time this season. They also took the lead through debutant Alexander Isak while keeper Nick Pope took so long over his goal-kicks that fans weren't just looking at their watches, they were shaking them. Was it going to be one of those nights?











After Bobby Firmino's classy equaliser on the hour, here's how the *Guardian* live-text described the added-time…

"90+1: The first of five added minutes ticks by without incident… 90+2: Diaz dribbles from the left touchline to the right, but there's no pass on anywhere for him. Newcastle have defended excellently tonight…

"90+3: Joelinton goes down with cramp. Liverpool opt not to stop the game. Joelinton gets back up. Van Dijk contests a high ball with Pope, who wins the battle. Pope goes down, and demands treatment. Say what you like about this tactic, it's been a masterclass in disruption. Liverpool have never been allowed to build momentum…

"90+4: The game restarts. Klopp enjoys an ironic back and forth with the fourth official… 90+5: Gomez has a whack that is currently sailing high over Stanley Park. Klopp grins wryly…

"90+7: Liverpool go up and have one last go themselves, Salah's effort turned around the post. One last corner!

"GOAL! Liverpool 2-1 Newcastle United (Carvalho 90+8) The corner's hit long. Some head tennis at the far stick. Salah battles. The ball drops to Carvalho who spins and absolutely roofs it from close range! Pope had no chance!

"90+9: Anfield erupts, just like it did all those years ago when Stan Collymore scored at the other end! There's almost a bench-emptying brawl in the dugout, presumably as a result of celebrations and a full and frank tactical discussion, but it just about calms down. What a stunner!"







OCTOBER SKY

Fair play to the 2,000 or so Seagulls fans who made the 540-mile round-trip to Anfield on the first day of October. This was what *The Times* described as a "weekend of chaos" with a nationwide rail strike meaning there were no trains operating between London and cities including Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and indeed Brighton. Meanwhile in Downing Street the PM was planning to "to do things differently" with "difficult decisions" which involved "disruption in the short term." What could possibly go wrong?

This was the same day as the North London derby, with the Manchester derby 24 hours later. Indeed, because of postponements and the international break the Merseyside derby at Goodison Park on 3 September had been Liverpool's last Premier League outing, and it showed.

Albion, in Roberto de Zerbi's first game as manager, won the toss ahead of kick-off, elected to defend the Kop-end goal in the first half and within 20 minutes were two-up through Leandro Trossard. The Reds fought back to 3-2 with less than half-an-hour remaining with a brace from Bobby Firmino and an Adam Webster own-goal, only for Trossard to complete his hat-trick on 83 minutes.

"This game has different stories," said Jürgen Klopp. "There is the story of how we conceded two early goals, there is the story of how we came back in the game, then there is the story of how we threw it away. We could have won but would we have deserved to win? I'm actually not sure. Brighton deserved something."

Just the eight more games before the end of the month…





MATCH OF THE DAY

Fiscal plans, who needs 'em? As the country continued to implode the Reds held their nerve, putting nine goals past Rangers in a European double-header either side of a narrow defeat to league leaders Arsenal in which they came from behind twice at the Emirates before losing to a penalty whose award was decidedly contestable.

And so to Anfield's first Sunday-afternoon kick-off of the season (in more ways than one, as it transpired). If football fans were beginning to feel the autumn chill this was the place to feel the heat. The pre-match media hype was all about the individual battles between Manchester City's attacking riches and Liverpool's defensive rearguard: centre-forward Haaland versus centre-half Van Dijk, Foden down the flank against Milner at right-back. Hardly anyone mentioned Mo Salah, who'd just scored the fastest hat-trick in Champions League history.

"We have players in our own ranks who are capable of deciding even the very biggest games," wrote captain Jordan Henderson in his matchday programme notes, "so it makes sense to believe in ourselves even though we know outsiders will be questioning us and maybe even doubting whether we can get back to previous levels."

Mo's Kop-end winner came on 76 minutes. Anfield's atmosphere did not disappoint. We'll let the dust settle regarding everything else.

SAMBA BEATS

Half-seven start – surely some mistake?! It was an old-school kick-off time and a classic Liverpool performance against a David Moyes team, even if the second half was a little too touch-and-go for comfort. Midfielder Thiago Alcantara was on the front of the matchday programme and he had another exceptional game before his withdrawal on the hour, but the night belonged to two South America stars.

A short-sleeved Darwin Nunez clearly meant business, arriving with his usual *yerba-mate* pre-match drink – a favourite of Uruguayan footballers – then proceeding to terrorise the West Ham defence. His fierce left-footed half-volley was tipped over the bar by goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski before his fine header from a Kostas Tsimikas cross put the Reds in front and his low drive struck the post.

The first half ended with a West Ham penalty awarded by VAR. Up stepped Jarrod Bowen in front of the Kop only to be denied by Alisson with a save to his right. Not a bad week for the Brazilian, who'd provided the assist for Mo Salah against City at the weekend.

It stayed that way, despite a late chance for the Hammers thwarted by a brilliant James Milner block. While Jürgen Klopp embraced his keeper at the final whistle, Nunez gave his shirt to two young fans wearing Penarol shirts (his former club) in the corner of the ground.




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SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE

Unseasonably warm temperatures a couple of days before Hallowe'en but a result which sent shivers down the spine. There were mitigating factors, not least midweek Champions League exertions away from home and injuries to key personnel, but as soon as the early goal went in following a misunderstanding at the back, there was a feeling it just wouldn't be Liverpool's night.

Anfield's last 7.45pm kick-off on a Saturday evening had seen Liverpool toil against Tottenham to a 1-1 draw on 7 May which put a dent in our title aspirations. This time the 2-1 reverse to a team struggling at the other end of the table may have damaged our top-four hopes but there is still time – and plenty of it – to turns things around.

With opposing keeper Illan Meslier playing a blinder – just as Nottingham Forest's Dean Henderson had done a week earlier at the City Ground – it spelt the end of Virgil van Dijk's 70-game unbeaten home run in the Premier League with Liverpool. All good things must come to an end. More good things are sure to be around the corner.

"When things are going well they are going to be blown out of proportion," said James Milner. "Win the first six games of the season and you're going to go unbeaten; have a bad run you're going to get relegated. That's the way of the world.

"We focus on the next game, try to perform as well as we can and try to get a result."



"ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE"

Former Reds winger Stewart Downing isn't ruling out another Liverpool charge up the Premier League table despite an indifferent season so far

A decade ago Stewart Downing was linking up with Jordan Henderson in the Liverpool midfield. Between them the North East duo made 89 appearances in that 2012/13 season, the first of Brendan Rodgers' managerial reign at Anfield.

Both players had been brought to Liverpool by Kenny Dalglish in the summer of 2011 and were initially deployed on either flank, Downing marauding down the left and Henderson offering a good balance on the right.

Last month Henderson captained Liverpool for the 250th time. He has lifted every major trophy for Liverpool and been capped 70 times by England.

Downing, who was back at Anfield for September's LFC Legends fixture against Manchester United, has enjoyed watching his progress from promising youngster to seasoned skipper.

"I think he's been a great story, hasn't he?" says the now 38-year-old. "It just shows what you can achieve. He came in as a young lad with a big price tag and a lot of people saying he could be the next Gerrard which was unfair because no-one was going to be the next Gerrard, he was a one-off.

"But I think he just stuck at his game and kept working hard. At one point it looked like he might be leaving for Fulham but you've got to give him credit and that showed his character and his strength to block that noise out and do everything to make it at Liverpool.

"Every year, I just think he's got better and better and improved.

"Even Brendan changed his mind and made him captain and that just shows that you can change a manager's mind and you can get into his plans and I think from then on, he's never looked back.

"Even the year when Liverpool nearly won the league under Brendan in 2013/14, Jordan was sent off late on against Manchester City and they really missed him for a few of the games in the run-in. I think if they'd had him for those games, they might have won it. That's how big he became for the team."

It was a big leap for a lad from Sunderland to leave his hometown club, but Downing says that from his initial conversations with Henderson he knew his new team-mate's mind was set on winning trophies with Liverpool.

Jordan was just about to turn 21 when he put pen to paper on the move and started to go about establishing himself in the team.

"They've always had an affection for the North East lads at Liverpool, but I knew straightaway that Jordan wanted to make it work here. When he left Sunderland he said to me, 'I think I only ever want to play for Liverpool'.

"That was true for a lot of people but he had a lot of time on his side, he was still young and although he had a lot to learn, he's done that and you've got to say that he's got better and better as the years have gone by.

"He's matured and you can see that in how he plays. Now he has become one of those leaders when ten years ago he was one of the young boys, so it's been a great journey for him.

"He's had a great career and he's won the lot. I'm sure there is still more left in him yet too. Hopefully he can win another league or another cup because I think with Jürgen, he's relentless and you've got to keep improving and keep doing the job or you don't play."



Only a handful of men have now led Liverpool on more occasions than Henderson, and Downing has not been surprised by the impact he has made with the armband.

"He's shown that he's a good captain. He's always been a good lad and a good leader. He's a really good character and that's why Jürgen is keen to keep those types of players

Interview: William Hughes


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around. Not only that, he generally plays most weeks so that proves that the manager trusts him."

While Stewart has been thrilled to see the impression Henderson has made at Liverpool, he has also been impressed by the early contributions of one of his successors in the left-wing role, Luis Diaz.

The Colombian is set to be sidelined until after the World Cup after sustaining a knee injury in last month's Premier League clash at Arsenal, but Downing believes the Reds' bold move to bring him in from FC Porto in January has already paid dividends.

"He's been great, especially when it probably wasn't planned for him to sign when he did. Sometimes a manager gets lucky in as much as you maybe take a bit of a risk on bringing someone in a bit early and it pays off.

"You have to say he hit the ground running and has been probably one of the big plusses in the year or so he's been here.

"Everyone seems very happy with him and even though the season has not started not as well as the team would have wanted, there have still been glimpses of what he can be.

"Fingers-crossed he will be back in action soon and hopefully he will be here for many years to come. I think he will be a top player."

While Downing was here, Liverpool broke the club's transfer record to sign a tall centre-forward in Andy Carroll. There have been echoes with this summer as the Reds again paid a significant fee to sign Darwin Nunez from Benfica.

Downing believes Nunez will prove to be an astute acquisition and help change the dynamic of the team's attacking threat.

"I think you need that, especially with the way Liverpool have been playing in the Klopp era. Players such as Roberto Firmino like to drop off and so there's not really been an out-and-out number nine and I think the manager's always wanted that.

"They have different options now and if it's not working with the more intricate football through the lines, sometimes you just want to get the ball out of your feet. Especially with Trent and Andy Robertson and the delivery they've got, Nunez's eyes should be lighting up really.

"I think he's been a bit up and down up to now and the sending-off against Palace probably didn't help him, but I think once he

"Especially with the way Liverpool have been playing in the Jürgen Klopp era, players such as Roberto Firmino like to drop off and so there's not really been an out-and-out number nine like Darwin Nunez and I think the manager's always wanted that – with him they have different options now"



finds his rhythm and adapts to the way the team is playing he'll be fine.

"He has to fit into the way of playing. Even if you look at Erling Haaland at City, as good as he's been, he's still adapting to the way they play and what they want. That takes time and you have to give Nunez time.

"He's still a young player. There's a lot of pressure on him and the team have not started the season well so he's been trying to find his feet. But once the team gets up to speed, I'm sure he'll just click."

Although the Reds made a sluggish start to the current campaign, Downing believes it is far too early to write Liverpool off and he is certain that the team will still be eyeing silverware this season.

"If you look at the gap Liverpool clawed back last season, you know that anything is still possible and in their heads they will know that they can still do it. But I just think that with City you can't give them too much, too early because you can't be trying to claw back a big advantage every season.

"Of course Liverpool have lost out to City by a point a couple of times in the last few years and so every point could be massive at the end of the season. It's not the state of play that we wanted





but I'm sure Jürgen will be saying there's a long way to go and we know we can catch them.

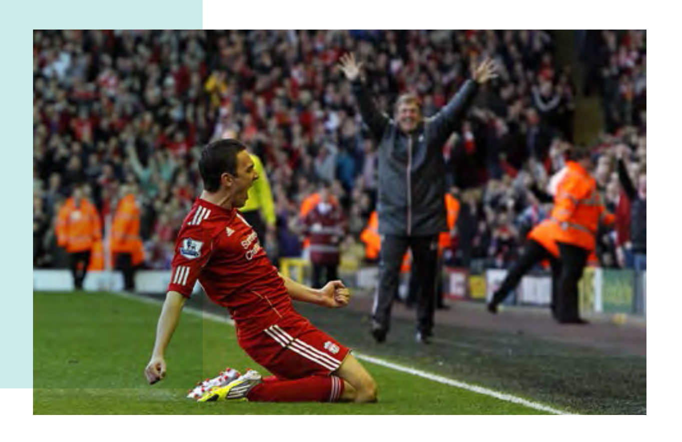
"City will probably have a dip at some point in the season and that's when Liverpool will need to pounce. Obviously with the World Cup coming up in the middle of the season, you want your players to come back healthy and fit so that will be a critical period as well.

"Then you never know, will Liverpool strengthen and bring in one or two more players in January just to give them that added kick? Like I say, the team hasn't been in full rhythm yet and I think once they find that and they go on that run of winning games, then I'm sure City and Pep will be well-aware of that because we proved last season that they can be caught."

Downing retired in August 2021. He played an incredible 722 club games over the course of a 19-year senior career spent entirely in England's top two tiers. His final stint came with a two-year spell at Blackburn Rovers, his last season seeing him play alongside Liverpool loanee Harvey Elliott.



"Kenny is still as witty as ever! He's possibly a little bit more laid-back nowadays but he doesn't like losing, especially against Man United – you could see that when we played with the LFC Legends at Old Trafford – he wasn't there for a jolly-up"



He says he has thoroughly enjoyed pulling on the famous red shirt again for the LFC Legends games this year too. He has taken part in the fixtures against Barcelona and Manchester United, something which has also afforded him the opportunity to drink in more of Sir Kenny Dalglish's team-talks.

"He's still as witty as ever! He's possibly a little bit more laid-back nowadays but Kenny doesn't like losing, especially against Man United – you could see that when we played at Old Trafford. He didn't want to lose and wasn't there for a jolly-up. And as good as the games always are in raising money for the LFC Foundation and their causes, he wants to win the games as well. That's what it's about and you could see how happy he was when we did win!

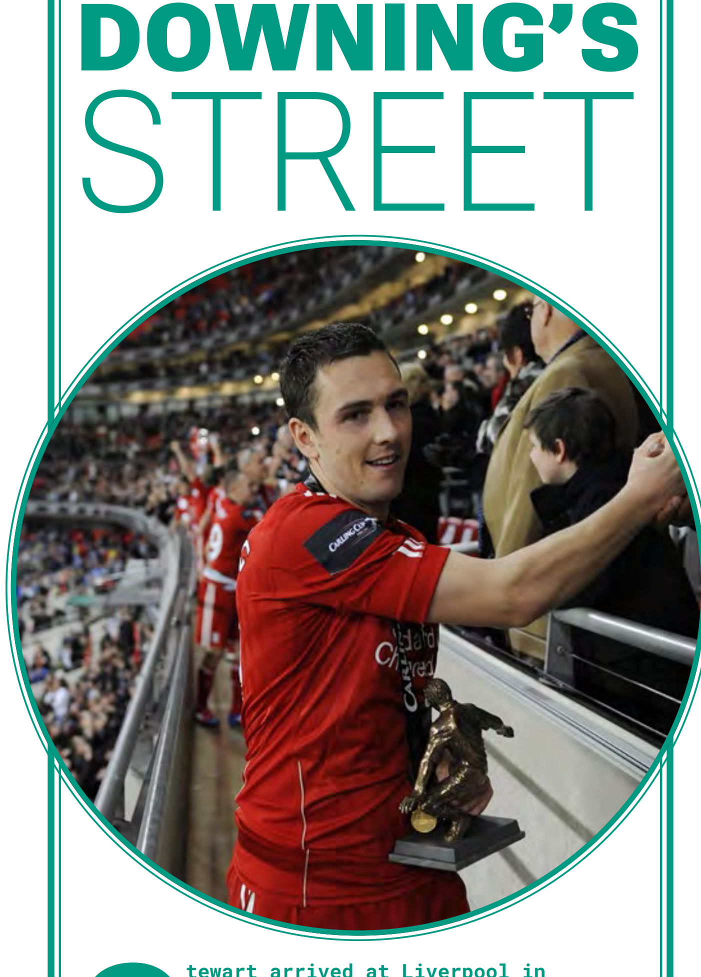
"The lads didn't want to let him down and they didn't want to let the fans down either and there was another really good turnout. At the end of the day you're still representing Liverpool and you want to win because you want to get picked the next time as well!"

Downing has stayed involved in the game since leaving Blackburn but says he is still weighing up his options about a post-playing career.

"I've just been doing bits and bobs in the media and I've quite enjoyed doing that, to be honest. I've also been doing a little bit of coaching too but I think at the moment I'm just enjoying what I'm doing. I've played in quite a lot of charity games such as the LFC Legends games and they keep me going. I played in the Masters a couple of months ago and I think I've only just got over that!

"I like being at home and being around my kids and my family when I'm not doing bits of media work. I retired just over a year ago so I'm still early into it and trying to find what I'm going to do. I don't want to rush into something, so we'll see and hopefully something will jump out."

DOWNING'S STREET



Stewart arrived at Liverpool in July 2011 after impressing manager Kenny Dalglish during spells at his hometown club Middlesbrough and Aston Villa.

He will be best remembered for his man-of-the-match display at Wembley against Cardiff City as the Reds won the League Cup in 2012. He went on to score seven goals and provided nine assists in 91 appearances for Liverpool during a two-season spell under Dalglish and Brendan Rodgers.

Of his 722 club appearances overall, there were 597 league outings for Middlesbrough, Sunderland, Aston Villa, Liverpool, West Ham and Blackburn Rovers. He scored 50 league goals and 63 in all competitions. Stewart was also capped 35 times by England.



GOING FOR GOLD

Words: William Hughes

There'll be no shortage of Liverpool players dreaming of World Cup glory in Qatar and some will be hoping it's a happy return having previously won the Club World Cup with the Reds in Doha in 2019! Here's a look at those hoping to shine on the world's biggest stage...



VIRGIL'S GROUP A

Virgil van Dijk will be aiming to lead the Netherlands to their first World Cup triumph. It will be the Reds no4's first experience of a World Cup finals as the Dutch did not qualify four years ago.

The Netherlands were knocked out in the round of 16 at last year's Euros but have shown their talent by reaching the finals of next year's UEFA Nations League under coach Louis van Gaal.

Virgil's former Liverpool team-mate Gini Wijnaldum, now at AS Roma, is set to miss the tournament after fracturing his tibia in training just weeks after moving on loan from Paris Saint-Germain.

The Dutch have finished runners-up on three occasions but have yet to land the main prize.

Virgil was first capped in a 2-1 Euro 2016 qualifying win away to Kazakhstan in October 2015 and his next cap will bring up 50 appearances for the Oranje. He has scored six times so far.

The Netherlands' first game of the tournament could well see him trying to keep one of his former Liverpool team-mates quiet. They open their campaign against Senegal and Sadio Mane, who recently finished as runner-up in the 2022 Ballon d'Or.

NETHERLANDS FIXTURES			
SENEGAL	v	NETHERLANDS	21 November
at Al Thumama Stadium, Doha			
NETHERLANDS	v	ECUADOR	25 November
at Khalifa International Stadium, Al Rayyan			
NETHERLANDS	v	QATAR	29 November
at Al Bayt Stadium, Al Khor			

GROUP B AND ENGLAND

England will be aiming to build on their semi-final spot in 2018, especially after just missing out at last year's Euros. Gareth Southgate's men lost to Italy on penalties in the final and will be bidding to go one better in Qatar.

Liverpool trio Jordan Henderson, Trent Alexander-Arnold and Joe Gomez will all be hoping to make the cut for Southgate's final 26-strong squad.

For Henderson it would represent a third World Cup, having previously played in the 2014 edition in Brazil and the 2018 event in Russia.

England's vice-captain had been capped 70 times as at the end of September. He made his debut while a Sunderland player in a friendly against France in November 2010, lining up alongside Steven Gerrard in the centre of midfield.

Alexander-Arnold was also part of the squad four years ago and will be aiming to add to his cap count of 17 since making his debut in 2018.

Gomez meanwhile would be playing at his first World Cup. Offering an option in the centre of defence or at right-back, he has been capped eleven times to date. His debut came as a substitute against Germany in a friendly back in November 2017.

The Reds could come up against former team-mates Neco Williams and Harry Wilson when England play their final group game against Wales in Al Rayyan.



ENGLAND FIXTURES			
ENGLAND	v	IRAN	21 November
at Khalifa International Stadium, Al Rayyan			
ENGLAND	v	USA	25 November
at Al Bayt Stadium, Al Khor			
WALES	v	ENGLAND	29 November
at Ahmad bin Ali Stadium, Al Rayyan			



IBOU'S GROUP D

It seems touch-and-go as to whether Ibrahima Konate will make the cut for Didier Deschamps' final squad. The Reds centre-back won his first senior cap in a 1-1 draw against Austria in June.

Injuries in the early part of this season have not helped his rhythm but he will still be optimistic of securing a place on the plane.

France are of course the reigning champions – 2018 was the nation's second World Cup success – but were eliminated in the round of 16 at the Euros last year.

Deschamps has now been coach of the team for a decade and will be hoping to mastermind another success for his country.

FRANCE FIXTURES			
FRANCE	v	AUSTRALIA	22 November
at Al Janoub Stadium, Al Wakrah			
FRANCE	v	DENMARK	26 November
at Stadium 974, Doha			
TUNISIA	v	FRANCE	30 November
at Education City Stadium, Al Rayyan			



THIAGO'S GROUP E

A dozen years on from their first triumph, Spain will be optimistic of mounting a challenge for the trophy again.

They were knocked out in the group stage in 2014 and the round of 16 in 2018. However, they showed their qualities again last summer when they reached the semi-finals of the Euros before losing to Italy on penalties following a 1-1 draw at Wembley.

Thiago Alcantara will hope to play his part for the squad which will be coached by Luis Enrique. The Reds midfielder played in the 2018 World Cup and is closing in on 50 caps (46 as at the end of September), having made his debut in a friendly against Italy in August 2011.

For once, Jürgen Klopp will be hoping his no6 will be on the losing side on 27 November when Spain come up against Germany in a fixture set to be one of the highlights of the group stage.

SPAIN FIXTURES			
SPAIN	v	COSTA RICA	23 November
at Al Thumama Stadium, Doha			
SPAIN	v	GERMANY	27 November
at Al Bayt Stadium, Al Khor			
JAPAN	v	SPAIN	1 December
at Khalifa International Stadium, Al Rayyan			

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GROUP G AND BRAZIL

Five-time winners Brazil were quarter-finalists in 2018 when Alisson Becker and Roberto Firmino played in their first World Cups. Now the Reds duo will be aiming to help their side to glory alongside team-mate Fabinho.

Coached by Tite, they were runners-up at last year's Copa America.

The Liverpool lads could come up against former team-mates in their opening group games. They will start against Serbia, who could include midfielder Marko Grujic in their ranks, before playing Xherdan Shaqiri's Switzerland in their second fixture.

Alisson had won 57 caps as at the end of September, Firmino 55 (with 17 goals) and Fabinho 28.

Our goalie made his debut back in 2015 against Venezuela while on the books of Internacional, while Bobby was at Hoffenheim when he first played for the senior side as a late substitute in a 4-0 defeat of Turkey in November 2014.

Fabinho meanwhile had just completed a permanent switch to AS Monaco when he debuted for A Selecao against Mexico in June 2015.

BRAZIL FIXTURES			
BRAZIL	v	SERBIA	24 November
at Lusail Iconic Stadium, Lusail			
BRAZIL	v	SWITZERLAND	28 November
at Stadium 974, Doha			
CAMEROON	v	BRAZIL	2 December
at Lusail Iconic Stadium, Lusail			

DARWIN'S GROUP H

The unfortunate injury that has ruled Diogo Jota out of the World Cup also ended the chances of a group stage head-to-head with fellow Reds attacker Darwin Nunez.

Portugal will meet Uruguay in their second fixture in Doha on 28 November with Nunez aiming to hit the headlines at his first World Cup finals. He made his senior international bow in October 2019 in a draw against Peru and has scored three goals in 13 appearances.

Twice winners in the early editions of the tournament, Uruguay were quarter-finalists in 2018 and also reached the last eight of last year's Copa America

Coached by Diego Alonso, their squad could also include ex-Reds duo Luis Suarez and Sebastian Coates.

URUGUAY FIXTURES			
URUGUAY	v	SOUTH KOREA	24 November
at Education City Stadium, Al Rayyan			
PORTUGAL	v	URUGUAY	28 November
at Stadium 974, Doha			
GHANA	v	URUGUAY	2 December
at Al Janoub Stadium, Al Wakrah			

LFC'S WORLD CUP WINNERS

Reds players have competed in the World Cup finals on a regular basis since Laurie Hughes represented England in the 1950 event in Brazil. But only a trio have been able to declare themselves champions of the world.

The first was Roger Hunt, the lad who progressed from playing Cheshire League football with Stockton Heath to parading the famous Jules Rimet Trophy around the hallowed Wembley turf in 1966.

Hunt was a key figure in Alf Ramsey's line-up from the start of the competition. He started all three of his country's group games, scoring in the 2-0 win against Mexico before grabbing both England goals in the 2-0 win over France.

'Sir' Roger also played in the quarter-final against Argentina and the semi-final against Portugal before starting the final against West Germany.

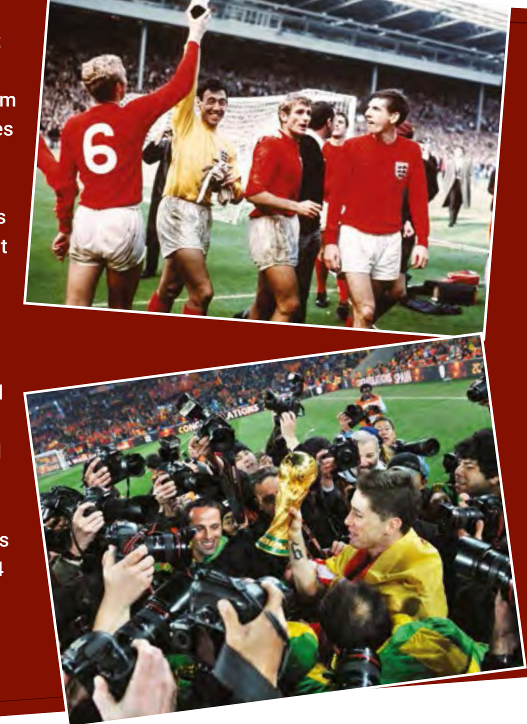
Liverpool had to wait 44 years for their next World Cup winner and then two came along at once. Fernando Torres and Pepe Reina were vital squad members as Spain followed up their Euro 2008 victory by taking the game's highest prize for the first time in South Africa.

Back-up goalie Reina was kept out of the team by captain Iker Casillas but kept him on his toes and ensured morale was high.

Torres, looking to shrug off an injury in the final month of the Premier League season, was a substitute in the opening group game against Switzerland (a shock 1-0 loss) and started the next two matches as the Spanish beat Honduras and Chile.

Coach Vicente del Bosque also started 'El Nino' in the next two matches against Portugal and Paraguay but introduced him as a sub in both the semi-final win over Germany and final win against Holland.

In more recent times midfielder Javier Mascherano was in the Argentina side that was edged out 1-0 by Germany in Brazil in the 2014 final, and four years ago centre-back Dejan Lovren was in the Croatia team beaten 4-2 by France in the Moscow final.




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THE CAPTAIN'S ART

Last month Jordan Henderson became only the sixth man to captain Liverpool on 250 occasions. Here he discusses his route to leadership and the role of wearing the armband

JORDAN, FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE, IS BEING AS A CENTRAL MIDFIELDER A GOOD POSITION TO BE IN FOR A CAPTAIN IN TERMS OF YOUR PERIPHERAL VISION?

I suppose you can get to shout at everyone! I get to speak to everyone easier because I'm in the middle of the pitch and you can sort of see everyone but as far as I'm concerned, it doesn't really matter what position you play in, just if you're a leader.

You're captain of a team for a reason, regardless of position.

WHO IS THE BEST CAPTAIN THAT YOU'VE PLAYED UNDER?

Stevie [Gerrard]. He would lead by example on the pitch and off the pitch. He was immaculate with everything he did. He was very professional and was just a great captain for Liverpool Football Club. So I'd definitely say him.

CAN YOU LEARN TO BECOME A CAPTAIN OR IS IT A NATURAL THING?

I think there are natural elements to it. When I look back to when I was younger, I think people saw leadership skills within me. When I was at Sunderland and captained the youth team and so on, I think people have seen leadership qualities within me as I was growing up.

BUT IT'S SOMETHING YOU CAN ALWAYS IMPROVE UPON TOO?

Yes. I still think you can improve and you can get better at leadership when you get more experience and you can learn from different people. So subconsciously I would have been learning from people and I've been lucky enough to work with some amazing leaders and captains and managers over the course of my career right from when I was a young kid all the way through at Sunderland.

Bally [Kevin Ball] was one example. You know he was amazing when I was a kid coming through. Bally really instilled discipline and was a fantastic leader so I was fortunate enough to work with people like that and take those qualities on.

Then there has been Roy Keane, Steve Bruce, Stuart Pearce, Stevie, Jürgen. I can reel those names off and, like I say, I've been very lucky and fortunate enough to work with those people and they have helped me massively.

WHO WAS YOUR FIRST CAPTAIN WHEN YOU CAME THROUGH AT SUNDERLAND INTO THE FIRST TEAM?

I think it would have been Lee Cattermole. Catts was very good as well. I think he was good for the younger lads coming in. He made



Lifting trophies is a nice thing but seeing my team-mates flourishing and winning awards is the best thing about being a captain

you feel welcome and things like that. And he was a great lad. I got along well with him. So I think it might have been Catts.

Yorkey [Dwight Yorke] was there as well, when I was coming through as a really young player. He was brilliant around the place. As you can imagine, he was the life and soul of everything and was really, really good with the younger lads from the Under-18s, making them feel welcome when they were coming up and getting involved in the first-team.

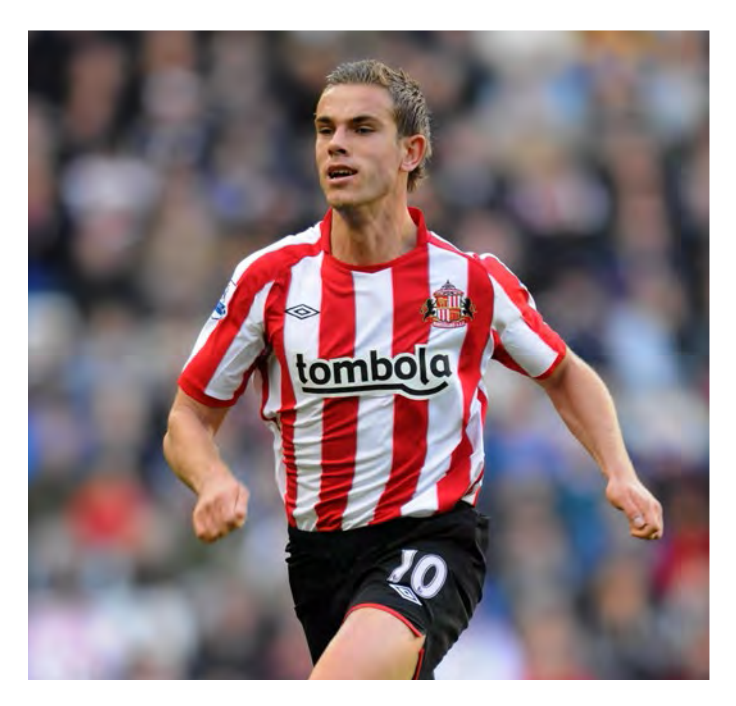
So like I say, I've been fortunate to work with a lot of good players, leaders, captains, managers, and just people in general.

WHAT'S THE BEST THING ABOUT BEING A CAPTAIN?
Lifting the trophies! That's a nice thing, but for me, I would say it is seeing my team-mates doing well, flourishing and winning awards. I do get satisfaction from seeing my team-mates doing so well because I think I feel as though I'm doing something right then.

You know, my responsibility is for the team. And if the team's doing well, and players around me are doing well, then I'd like to think I was doing something right.

IS THERE A BAD SIDE? WHAT'S THE WORST PART ABOUT BEING THE CAPTAIN?
I wouldn't necessarily call it the hardest part but there's a lot of stuff that you do away from football and behind the scenes that probably goes unnoticed, but that's part of the territory and part of the responsibility. And I take that very seriously.

But I think that's just the type of person I am anyway. I think there's a lot of different people or different captains that lead in different ways. And I constantly want to improve and get better not only as a footballer but as a captain and as a person as well.



So, as a team-mate, I'm always wanting to improve. I'm always wanting to help in even the hardest parts. I suppose I enjoy that to some extent, because I always want to do it and I want to help people, be that players, staff and everybody behind the scenes as well.

"WHAT A LEADER"

Jordan Henderson is only the sixth man to start 250 games as Liverpool captain. He reached that milestone in last month's Champions League victory against Ajax at the Johan Cruyff ArenA. The other five men to have achieved the feat are: Steven Gerrard (472), Ron Yeats (416), Emlyn Hughes (335), Donald McKinlay (293) and Alex Raisbeck (267).

Liverpool FC Women's captain Niamh Fahey has paid tribute to her men's counterpart after Henderson led the team for the 250th time: "Congratulations to Jordan. He's been a fantastic captain for Liverpool. He's led the team through one of the most successful periods for the club so it was a historic night for him and one he thoroughly deserved. What a leader he's been."







So there's a lot of stuff that goes on, but luckily enough for me I've got so many good team-mates and leaders within the squad who have helped me and take the weight off me a little bit in that respect.

Milly [James Milner] is amazing like that. Virgil [van Dijk], Robbo [Andy Robertson] and Ali [Allison] too. People like that really help and make my life easier.

YOU'RE KNOWN FOR NOT DOING THINGS BY HALVES: YOU EITHER DO THEM PROPERLY OR YOU DON'T DO THEM AT ALL. HAVE YOU HAD TO MAKE SACRIFICES TO BE THAT PERSON AND CAPTAIN?

I suppose so but I think you've got a responsibility more to the team and your team-mates and are thinking about them constantly. I suppose that is a sacrifice in itself as you're not totally thinking about yourself and how you can improve and what you can do. You can get caught up too much with that and it's about learning and figuring that out.

The manager has been brilliant with things like that and when he first came in he explained that it's about figuring all those things out. You still want to become the best version of yourself, but you also want to be there for everybody else and you want to be able to help them. You need to know how to treat certain people differently and what helps one person in one way, may help another in a different way.

It's about picking up on things and just making everybody together and having a good dressing-room, which again, doesn't fall solely on me. But I've got to take a lot of responsibility for that. And again the other lads help me so much with that and make it easier for me to be able to do that.

WHAT'S THE BEST ADVICE YOU'VE BEEN GIVEN?

I always think people are talking about captaincy, talking about leadership, there's so many different ways so there's almost no right and wrong way. When people say, 'Be yourself', I think that's the most important thing. You know, find your own way, find your own path. Yes, it'll be tough and there will be moments where you'll have doubts, but it's about using them to become better and stronger.

When people say, 'Be yourself', I think that's the most important thing. You know, find your own way, find your own path. Yes, it'll be tough and there will be moments where you'll have doubts, but it's about using them to become better and stronger

It's also good advice to use the people around you. When I was first captain of the team I felt as though all of the responsibility was on me solely and it took a lot of weight on my shoulders. But really I think part of leadership is being able to delegate, being able to help get people involved to help you and help the team and get people together. Again, thankfully, I've got so many good captains and leaders within the dressing-room. That's made it much easier for me to do that.

WITH THAT IN MIND, WAS THERE EVER A TIME THAT YOU THOUGHT, 'I DON'T WANT TO BE THE CAPTAIN? I'D QUITE HAPPILY HAND IT BACK'?

Not really. There have probably been dark times and moments where I've maybe questioned myself during my career, but you might have to buy my book to find that one out! I've tried to be as open as I can about things like that in the book.





> Part of leadership is being able to delegate, being able to get people involved to help the team, and thankfully I've got so many good leaders within the dressing-room



SO GOING RIGHT BACK TO THE BEGINNING, WHAT WAS THE SPARK THAT GOT YOU INTO FOOTBALL?
To be fair, I've been playing ever since I can remember. My parents did tell me that as soon as I could walk, I was kicking the ball about. So I think it was just something that I loved and was natural at right from the beginning. I can't really remember one thing other than just kicking the ball about and loving football from the first minute.

HOW BIG A PART DID BRIAN, YOUR DAD, PLAY IN THAT?
Yes, I suppose he'd have been a massive part but again, I think he'll say that he didn't really push or force football on me, it was just something that was a habit. You know, I think it was just natural like I say that once I could stand on my feet and walk around it was pretty much the case that I had a ball at my feet constantly.

HAVE YOUR LITTLE ONES GOT THE BUG?
My girls like playing a little bit. They are nine and seven now, so they're starting to understand it a lot more and they play a little bit at school. My little boy's still young, he's only two. But yeah, he's kicking the ball about and things. He gets bored after a little bit, but we'll see!

DO YOU EVER GIVE TEAM-TALKS YOURSELF?
Not often. Sometimes if I feel, or we feel as a team that we need to speak just solely as a team, then yes. And there have been times when I've chipped along with other players before games.

We've got our own routine and sometimes I'll say a few things or Milly or Virgil will say a few things but it's more just as we're getting ready as we go out onto the pitch. It's not a team-talk as such, but for sure if we feel as though we need it for whatever reason, we'll call a team meeting and be honest and open with each other.

DOING IT BY THE BOOK

In his new book *Jordan Henderson: The Autobiography* the skipper charts his career of more than a decade and counting at Anfield from when he first signed for the Reds in 2011, a spell that includes over 450 appearances and seven trophies so far during his tenure as captain.

A relentless and inspiring presence, he's lifted the Premier League, Champions League, FIFA Club World Cup, Emirates FA Cup, UEFA Super Cup, Carabao Cup and FA Community Shield with his trademark 'Hendo shuffle'.

In the autobiography he talks about his journey from growing up in Sunderland – with football his all-consuming passion as a kid – to becoming one of Liverpool's most decorated captains.

From struggling to settle under his first manager Kenny Dalglish, to Brendan Rodgers handing him the armband following Steven Gerrard's departure, and eventually those major honours and successes under Jürgen Klopp.

Off the field he is a fearless ambassador, with his role in backing the NHS following his work during the pandemic and unifying players across the Premier League to support NHS Charities Together.

Jordan's story also carries an inspirational message for anyone facing hurdles and barriers, that they will not stop you reaching your goals.









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OH WHEN THE REDS!

Anything the seniors can do… Liverpool's exciting young aces are through to the knockout stages of this season's UEFA Youth League in style



Liverpool Under-19s reached the last 16 of the UEFA Youth League after winning Group A in style. The Reds took 15 points from their six games to finish clear of runners-up Ajax and won their three home games at The Academy by an aggregate score of 13-1.

With the play-offs to decide which 'Champions League path' group runners-up and which 'national champions path' qualifiers will join the eight group winners in the knockout stages not taking place until 7/8 February, coach Barry Lewtas' side must now wait for three months to see who they will face next.

The draw for the last 16 will take place in Nyon on 13 February 2023 with the round of 16 held over two days on 28 February/1 March.

Over the course of the six group games the Reds scored 20 goals from 84 shots, 44 of them on target. They conceded eight times – twice from penalties – and received 11 yellow cards and one red but bossed the group.

Left-back Luke Chambers, midfielders James McConnell and Melkamu Frauendorf and forward Ben Doak played in all six matches, while Oakley Cannonier (7), Doak (4), Trent Kone-Doherty (3), Chambers (2) and Lewis Koumas (2) finished the group stage as Liverpool's top goalscorers. Frauendorf and Jarell Quansah also notched a goal apiece.

With players such as Kaide Gordon, Isaac Mabaya and recently-injured Cannoiner all set to return to action in 2023, the Reds look well-placed to have a crack at winning the UEFA Youth League for the first time, although Real Madrid, Atletico Madrid, Barcelona, Manchester City and Sporting Club de Portugal also had strong group campaigns.

Here's how the Reds reached the last 16 in the second half of the group stage…

GROUP A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Liverpool	6	5	0	1	20	8	15
Ajax	6	4	1	1	17	10	13
Rangers	6	2	0	4	13	20	6
Napoli	6	0	1	5	7	19	1

Words: Chris McLoughlin

MATCHDAY 4
Rangers 3 Liverpool 4 (Cannonier 2, Frauendorf, Doak)
Wednesday 12 October 2022

Ben Doak scored a stunning solo goal to give ten-man Liverpool U19s a thrilling 4-3 victory against Rangers at Partick Thistle's Firhill.

The 16-year-old Scot's family were in the crowd to see his return to Glasgow and Doak didn't disappoint with an 80th-minute winner after the Reds blew a 3-1 lead following the second-half dismissal of centre-back Lee Jonas.

Doak created Liverpool's opener when he lifted Luke Chambers' cross over the head of a defender and fired a shot goalwards that Oakley Cannonier prodded home after it was blocked.

Rangers levelled in the tenth minute when Jason Lindsay scored from the penalty-spot after Reds goalie Harvey Davies brought down Zakariya Lovelace, but Liverpool led again in the 18th minute via Melkamu Frauendorf's first goal of the season from a nice Bobby Clark pass.

Robbie Ure missed a sitter for the Gers, heading wide of an open goal after Davies saved from Connor Allen, but there was no stopping Cannonier. Played through on goal by Doak, who won a tackle on the edge of his own box to seize possession, Cannonier struck his seventh UEFA Youth League goal of the season at the third attempt following two blocked efforts.

The striker injured himself in the process of scoring or celebrating the goal and was replaced by Lewis Koumas, but it was the loss of Jonas early in the second period for a professional foul that changed the game.

Rangers got the scoreline back to 3-3 with goals from Ure and Arron Lyall and looked favourites to find a winner until ex-Celtic winger Doak produced a moment of magic.

He won possession near the corner flag, dribbled past one defender, cut past a second and bent the ball into the far corner with the outside of his right boot before continuing his run to the opposite corner flag in celebration.

It left Barry Lewtas' side with 12 points from 12 and needing just a point in Amsterdam to qualify for the last 16.

***Liverpool U19s:** Davies, Miles, Quansah (C), Jonas, Chambers, Clark, Corness, McConnell, Doak (Pilling 90), Cannonier (Koumas 38), Frauendorf.*
Subs not used: Hewitson, Hayes-Green, Young, Kone-Doherty, Gyimah.













MATCHDAY 5
Ajax 3 Liverpool 1 (Kone-Doherty)
Wednesday 27 October 2022

A draw in Amsterdam would have secured automatic qualification to the knockout stages, but with goalkeeper Harvey Davies, right-back Isaac Mabaya, centre-back Lee Jonas and leading goalscorer Oakley Cannonier all missing through injury or suspension, the Reds suffered their first UEFA Youth League defeat of the season at Amsterdam's De Toekomst.

Luke Chambers moved across centre-back with central midfielder Dominic Corness filling in at left-back and it was down the Reds' left where Ajax created the opening goal. Rafael Sarfo sent a low cross into the box and Jaydon Banel got ahead of Liverpool's central defenders to slot the ball past Luke Hewitson.

They weren't helped by some erratic officiating by Austrian referee Christian-Petru Ciochirca, who yellow-carded Corness for an innocuous foul but didn't book Banel for turning a cross against the post with his hand.

Liverpool grew frustrated and conceded again in the 41st minute when Sarfo again crossed low from the Liverpool left and Gabriel Misehouy had time and space to control the ball before finding the net.





It sparked Barry Lewtas' team into life. Lewis Koumas had a diving header from a Chambers cross saved and a minute before half-time 16-year-old Trent Kone-Dohery got his first UEFA Youth League goal when he headed Ben Doak's deflected cross home at the far-post.

Liverpool had what looked like a clear penalty waved away after the break when Bobby Clark was tripped in the box and after another foul on the forward went unpunished Ajax broke forward and made it 3-1, David Kolokoh's shot hitting Chambers and looping over Hewitson.

Tensions boiled over with Melkamu Frauendorf and Oualid Agougil booked for a fracas Clark was also involved in before Koumas shot tamely at the Ajax goalie when Frauendorf was better-placed to hit Doak's pull-back.

Corness flashed a shot wide and Doak hit the side netting, but Ajax prevailed 3-1 to leave the Reds needing a point at home to Napoli to qualify.

Liverpool U19s: *Hewitson, Miles, Quansah (C), Chambers, Corness, Doak, McConnell, Frauendorf, Kone-Doherty (Pilling 68), Clark, Koumas (Young 78). Subs not used: Trueman, Kelly, Hayes-Green, Danns, Giblin.*

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MATCHDAY 6
Liverpool 5 (Koumas, Doak, Chambers, Kone-Doherty 2) Napoli 0
Tuesday 1 November 2022

Liverpool sealed their place in the last 16 of the UEFA Youth League with an emphatic 5-0 victory against Napoli at The Academy.

Under-18s boss Marc Bridge-Wilkinson stepped in to take charge of the Reds, with U21s boss Barry Lewtas recuperating after planned surgery, and his side dominated the game but should have conceded a tenth-minute penalty when Luke Chambers felled Matteo Marchisano in the box only for Welsh referee Tom Owen to wave play on.

Trent Kone-Doherty and Melkamu Frauendorf both had shots blocked before Liverpool broke the deadlock just before the half-hour mark. Jarell Quansah brought the ball forward and from a Chambers pass Frauendorf hit a shot on the turn. The ball was flying wide until it struck Lewis Koumas on the shoulder and deflected into the Napoli net.

Left-back Chambers almost had a goal himself moments later but his cross-shot was cleared off the line by Luigi D'Avino before the lively Ben Doak curled an effort past the post.

The speedy Scot, who turns 17 on 11 November, had the Napoli defence back-pedalling all afternoon and it was no surprise that he scored Liverpool's second in the 51st minute. He drove into the visitors box at pace, beat left-back Enrico Giannini with a step-over and fired an angled shot into the bottom corner.

Five minutes later Doak turned provider. After exchanging passes with Bobby Clark from a corner he dribbled past three Napoli defenders before slipping a pass to Chambers, who found the bottom corner with an accurate low drive from the edge of the box.









Napoli made three subs but couldn't stem the tide as Kone-Doherty struck twice in four minutes. His first was a poacher's goal from close-range when Napoli keeper Claudio Turi could only parry a Fraunendorf shot after Clark dribbled into the box, but his second showed what the winger from Derry is all about.

Clark hit the post from close-range and although Napoli cleared, Lee Jonas won possession and found Kone-Doherty in the box. An injection of pace allowed him to glide past his man before he lifted the ball past Turi with his left foot.

At 5-0 up the Reds eased up a little and Napoli broke the play up with a number of fouls that saw four of their five substitutes booked and coach Nicolo Frustalupi yellow carded for dissent, but it mattered little.

Liverpool were top of Group A and heading to the last 16 where, on this form, nobody will want to face them in the knockout stages having won five of their six games and scored 20 goals along the way.

***Liverpool U19s:** Davies, Miles, Quansah (C), Jonas, Chambers, Clark (Gyimah 74), McConnell, Frauendorf (Pilling 67), Doak, Koumas, Kone-Doherty (Young 79). Subs not used: Hewitson, Danns, Samuels, Giblin.*



RYLEE MOTIVATED

Interview: William Hughes

One year on from a car accident which could have ended her life, Liverpool FC Women's goalkeeper Rylee Foster is counting her blessings and giving great support and inspiration to team-mates and supporters alike



Liverpool men's 1-0 win over Manchester City on Sunday 16 October was one of the highlights of the season so far. For a couple of people in the crowd that day it was a particularly poignant moment too.

The game at Anfield came a year on from an horrific car-accident which could have easily cost Liverpool FC Women's goalkeeper Rylee Foster her life.

During an international break she was on holiday in Finland and travelling towards Helsinki to see a concert by the Canadian rapper Drake when the car, carrying Foster and four friends, caught some ice and flipped into the air before hydroplaning across the wet surface.

Foster, a passenger in the back and wearing a seat belt, was ejected through the windscreen. The Canadian youth international, now 24, says she remembers the car spinning but not a lot else.

She fractured her C1 cervical vertebra, the neck bone directly beneath the skull, in four places. Her adjacent C2 was also fractured. "You don't really hear of that happening in sport," she says. "You might get a single fracture from one of the vertebrae in your neck but not to this extent. It was unique and I should have died."

As well as the injuries to her spine, there was a subdural haematoma (where the blood vessel was damaged in the space between the skull and surface of the brain) plus major damage to her right shoulder, hip, thigh and knee.

"The doctor in the hospital told me bluntly I should be a tetraplegic at the highest level. People see pictures of the car and my injuries and there were probably several times I should have died but I didn't."



Rylee now has the numbers 10:16 etched in red ink on her right arm. Not only did the accident happen on 16 October but at 10.16pm too. The tattoo serves as a reminder – as if she needs it – of the exact moment her life changed.

"It's just a reminder of what happened and how far I have come," she explains. "It's definitely changed my outlook on life. I'm just so grateful for everything and everybody I have in my life. It definitely makes you take life more seriously when something like that happens to you."

Foster also has a tattoo on her left arm, which reads 'You'll Never Walk Alone'. Although she was born in Ontario, her family hails from Liverpool and she is a lifelong fan of the Reds.

I got that tattoo in 2014 after my grandmother passed away. My grandparents are both from Wavertree but moved away during the war. It's a commemorative thing to show that they are always with me."

Taking that into account, Anfield was the perfect place for her to be twelve months on from the accident. "I actually woke up feeling okay that day," she says. "I watched the game and there was no better place to be. I'm sure for a lot of Liverpool supporters, it was great to see the men beat Manchester City.

"Hearing *You'll Never Walk Alone* being sung in the stadium that day was really special. My dad [Dave] and I looked at each other and I think we were both just so grateful for how far I've come.

"Around the exact time of the anniversary I was quite emotional. I just stopped to reflect on what might have been because, as I say, I could have died. But I believe everything happens for a reason and I do believe there was someone or something watching over me."

As part of the recovery process she spent half-a-year in a halo brace, a device that was screwed into her skull in order to take the pressure off her fractured neck. Unable to move her torso, she spent six months sleeping upright.

She was awake when the equipment she calls a 'torture device' was drilled into her skull in four places. Despite the encumbrance of the halo, she was back at Prenton Park as often as she could be, cheering on the rest of the Liverpool FC Women team from the stands.

"That was important to me because although I was still in a very vulnerable state, I felt I still had a role to play. As a footballer I saw it as my job to be the biggest cheerleader of the team and to show my support to them every day and do whatever I could to help them push over the line and get the results that we needed.



"It was also for the fans because their messages of support were so important to me and so I felt it was important to let them know that I was doing okay and that I was still kicking along."

She had the halo device removed at the Walton Centre in Liverpool on 1 March and one of the most evocative images of last season's promotion-winning campaign was seeing Foster, who had made nine appearances for the Reds before her accident, celebrating with the trophy after the final home game of the campaign against Sheffield United Women.

"It might have looked like a breezy season for us but I wasn't the only one hurting," she explains. "Staff members lost loved ones during the season and so it was a full triumph over adversity too.







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"It was an honour to be there and celebrate with the girls and the staff. Personally, just to hold the trophy was a big thing because I'd been through such a big struggle that season. I truly felt like we did win and I had a piece of that."

This summer, nine months after her accident, Rylee began her rehabilitation training programme at the Rehab 4 Performance Sports Injury Clinic in the Garston area of the city.

She is working with two names who will be familiar to Liverpool supporters: ex-Reds physio Matt Konopinski and former Liverpool FC Women's strength and conditioning coach Alan Jordan, plus sport and exercise medical consultant Dr Nigel Jones.

"It's been an absolute privilege to work with them," she says. "Matt is an amazing person to work with. He is just helping me through it and he knows what I need.

"Alan too knows what it's like in a sporting environment and understands the demands on the body and where I need to be. So I couldn't be more thankful to have the opportunity to work with them day-in and day-out."

Foster, who suffers from post-concussion migraines, is grateful for the support of the club. In February she started meeting a therapist specialising in trauma.

"The sessions have been amazing. The help that I've had has been key, particularly from a mental perspective. Without that, I don't know if I would be where I am today. The mind is the most important tool in all of our bodies and all of our livelihoods, so for me it's about conquering the battles and the demons that I have acquired.

"I just want to make sure that I am doing everything possible to get myself in the right position and deal with things in a professional manner because I could easily deny everything and hide from the realities and truths of what I've been through but that's not going to help me get on with my life."

When she has gaps in her rehab programme Foster will try to visit her team-mates at the Solar Campus training ground in Wallasey, typically a couple of times a week.

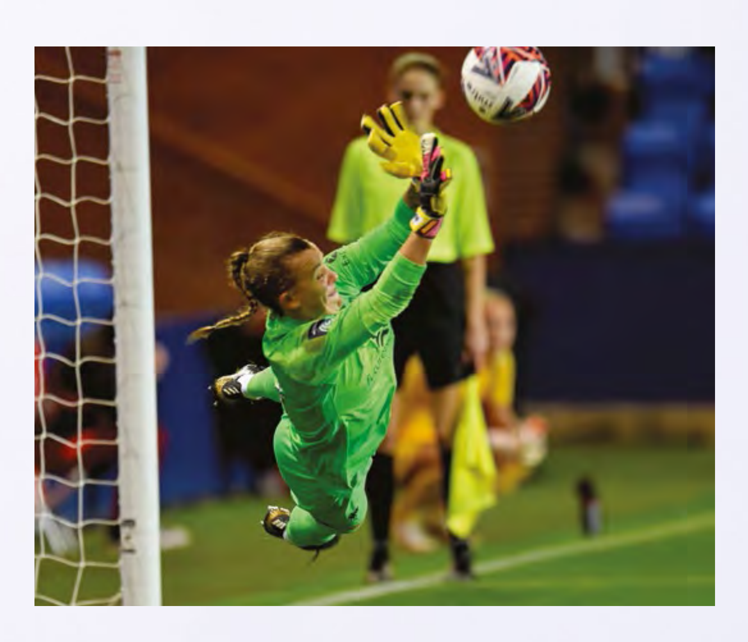
"Coming into the training ground in general is great. I love being around the girls. They are my pride and joy here in Liverpool so any time I get to go around and see them when I have time in my rehab schedule or on a game day is just nice.

"It gives me a warm feeling and everybody is always happy to see me. I'm honoured to be part of such a great group. We are a family and I wouldn't want it any other way."

Foster does not know whether she will play football again but given her incredible determination and resilience, you wouldn't bet against her. For now, however, she says it is simply a case of taking things one day at a time.

"It's literally that. I'm not thinking too far ahead, just moment by moment and piece by piece. I'm doing everything possible to get myself in the best position to have a quality of life, most importantly.

"Hopefully I will be able to achieve my goals and my dreams as an individual. No matter what, I know I'm in good hands."





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"SHE'S A BRILLIANT CHARACTER"

Liverpool FC Women goalkeeping coach Joe Potts says Foster is a huge miss on the training pitch but knows her recovery is of primary importance.

"It's difficult not having Rylee on the grass," he admits. "She's a brilliant character as we all know. Obviously I got time on the training ground when I met her last season.

"It was very unfortunate what happened with the accident, but it just shows that there are things that are bigger than football. So right now, we're speaking with Rylee and the medical team and it's about getting her in a good place physically and mentally. There's no pressure or rush to get her back on that grass.

"She comes out with us when she's here to support the girls so she still has a big contribution to give us in terms of our goalkeeper union. She watches games and looks at clips and she'll still give me her opinion on things. That's massive for me because, as I say, she's a brilliant character.

"Obviously we wish her well in her recovery and right now it's just important to get her in a good place."

LFCW FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2022/23

SEPTEMBER		
Sun 18	CHELSEA	2-1
Sun 25	EVERTON	0-3
OCTOBER		
Sun 2	Sunderland (Conti Cup)	1-0
Sun 16	Tottenham Hotspur	0-1
Sun 23	ARSENAL	0-2
Wed 26	Leicester City (CC)	4-0
Sun 30	Manchester City	1-2
NOVEMBER		
Sun 6	ASTON VILLA	2pm
Sun 20	Brighton & Hove Albion	2pm
Thu 24	Reading	7pm
Sun 27	BLACKBURN ROVERS (CC)	2pm
DECEMBER		
Sun 4	WEST HAM UNITED	2pm
Wed 7	MANCHESTER CITY (CC)	7pm
Sun 11	LEICESTER CITY	2pm
JANUARY		
Sat 14	Manchester United	12pm
Sun 22	Chelsea	2pm
FEBRUARY		
Sun 5	READING	2pm
MARCH		
Sun 5	Arsenal	2pm
Sun 12	TOTTENHAM HOTSPUR	2pm
Sun 26	Everton	1pm
APRIL		
Sun 2	West Ham United	3pm
Sun 23	BRIGHTON & HOVE ALBION	2pm
Sun 30	Leicester City	3pm
MAY		
Sun 7	MANCHESTER CITY	2pm
Sun 21	Aston Villa	2pm
Sun 28	MANCHESTER UNITED	2pm

Home games in capitals; fixtures subject to change

WHAT OCCURRED OCT

YOU WIN SOME...

Words: Chris McLoughlin

After a month without Premier League footy the Reds finally returned to Anfield to play Brighton on the first day of October and in the opening 20 minutes looked rustier than a Lada in a scrapyard after a decade in the Mersey.

New Seagulls boss Roberto de Zerbi must have thought he'd misread the stat that said Liverpool hadn't lost a home league game in front of a crowd since 2017 as his side were 2-0 up in 17 minutes. But for the brilliance of Alisson Becker, it would have been four. Like an online grocery picker the lads were all over the shop, but if there's one thing we've learnt since Jürgen Klopp took charge it's that the Reds never give up.

The comeback started when Jordan Henderson played in Mo Salah and he knocked the ball across for Bobby Firmino to score. The assistant referee wasn't having it, but the man in Stockley Park said 'sim senhor' and it was 2-1.

When Bobby took on a Luis Diaz pass and waltzed through the Brighton defence like Tony Adams in a sequin waistcoat before slotting home it was 2-2 and then came a surprisingly underwhelming third goal.

Maybe because it was an own-goal at the Annie Road end, maybe because nobody was quite sure how it went in, maybe because the players didn't overly celebrate and maybe because it was Brighton, but going 3-2 up after being 2-0 down normally sparks wilder scenes than how Anfield responded after Adam Webster's oggy.

Or maybe the crowd simply sensed what was coming next as Leandro Trossard became the first away player to score an Anfield hat-trick in the Prem since that Russian fella whose surname sounded like a niche beauty treatment got four for Arsenal. The only positive was that Bobby now has five home league goals this season – more than he managed at Anfield in the previous three seasons combined. Anyone want to buy some well-clutched straws?

"Absolutely not happy," was Joel Matip's verdict. "Our expectations are higher than this. We just have to be better, start better and show our quality. I don't care who is coming, we just have to step up and do better."

On the plus side Caoimhin Kelleher made his comeback from injury in an U21s game and Liverpool Women got their Continental Cup campaign off to a winning start thanks to Megan Campbell's goal at Sunderland. It was also good to read club partners Expedia are paying for fans to travel to LFC Women away matches this season.





"Expedia approached us with this idea to help get fans to the away matches and we were thrilled to be able to partner with them," said LFC commercial director Ben Latty. "It's an incredible gesture to support our women's team away."

Rangers supporters were soon coming down the road for the first competitive fixture between the Reds and the Gers. They showed a touch of class when manager Gio van Bronckhorst and skipper James Tavernier laid a wreath at the Hillsborough Memorial while the travelling fans seemed to be enjoying themselves at Coyote Ugly on Bold Street judging by their social-media videos.

The following evening they discovered that no matter what you do the night is gonna get to you when you play at Anfield in the Champions League. Trent Alexander-Arnold scored a brilliant free-kick, Mo Salah converted a penalty and we even got to see the lesser-spotted Ben Davies, but if it wasn't for veteran goalkeeper Allan McGregor Rangers would have returned to Glasgow beaten by six. Which is what happened to Ajax with a few gasps greeting the news that Napoli had won 6-1 at the Johan Cruyff ArenA. Maybe that 4-1 defeat in Naples was against a better side than we realised.

Most of the post-match Anfield talk was about Klopp ditching his usual 4-3-3 formation and playing Salah, Firmino, Darwin Nunez and Diogo Jota in a four-pronged attack.

"The gaffer told us yesterday about the formation and we just tried to adapt," said Mo. "I think it was working well. We created many chances in the first half and second half, we tried to score. It's an offensive formation. It was good for all of us upfront, especially because we all want to score goals."

Speaking of teams with a new impetus, it'll be fascinating to see how Bayer Leverkusen get on following the appointment of Xabi Alonso as manager. "I want to give the team a clear idea of how we want to play," he said. "We want to reach that by working every day. I want us to play modern football, be dominant, intense and dynamic. The players should enjoy and like how they're playing. We want the stadium to be packed and to have a great atmosphere. We want the crowd to be pushing us."

Sounds good on paper and while 2026 is a long way off unless you're Marty McFly or Doc Brown, I wouldn't be ruling Xabi out of an Anfield return when Klopp hangs up his baseball cap if things go well at the BayArena.







Back to the, er, present and the reality that you can't just have good news on the injury front was emphasised on 7 October. Klopp revealed that Andy Robertson and Curtis Jones were both close to returning to action…but then dropped the bombshell that Arthur Melo suffered a serious muscle injury in training. If that lad didn't have bad luck he'd have no luck.

The awful Arthur news came the day before the seventh anniversary of Klopp's anniversary as Liverpool FC manager and to mark the occasion a brand new book entitled *I Feel Fine: The Klopp 100* has been published. Never mind *War and Peace* – this may well be the greatest book of all-time.



Featuring a cracking cover and brilliantly-written, it features 100 memorable things from the Klopp era and, what's that? I should really mention I'm the co-author? Next you'll be telling me I can't review it on Amazon with a fake ID of Brian McGee.

Anyhow, it's probably best not to review referee Michael Oliver's performance in Arsenal 3 Liverpool 2 in print to save using the asterisk key. Yes, the Reds started badly yet again and yes, losing to the league leaders felt like a body-blow that ended our Premier League challenge title before it even started, but some of the decisions…

Gabriel handles the ball with his arm in an unnatural position in the Arsenal box. No penalty. Gabriel Jesus goes down after Thiago breathes near him. Penalty. And this on a not-so Super Sunday when we also lost Alexander-Arnold and Diaz to injury after some robust challenges.

It wasn't all bad news. Nunez took his goal well and is increasingly looking the part while Diogo Jota's pass for Firmino's 692nd goal against the Gunners was rather good too, but our away form is becoming increasingly concerning.

A bit of perspective arrived with the news that Layton Stewart had scored a hat-trick in a 5-0 win against Wolves U21s. The 20-year-old Scouser was tipped for big things until being ruled out for 13 months with an ACL injury, so to see Stewart (3) on the scoresheet was the highlight of the weekend.





Fellow Academy starlet James McConnell, signed from Sunderland at U15 level, also penned a new long-term contract with the Reds, but then more depressing injury news emerged with Matip the latest to be in the treatment room instead of heading up to Ibrox for Rangers v Liverpool.

In Glasgow it was Liverpool's turn to show some class with CEO Billy Hogan laying a wreath at the Ibrox Disaster Memorial to pay tribute to the 66 supporters who tragically lost their lives on 2 January 1971.

On the pitch it turned out to be one of those mad nights that nobody saw coming when Scott Arfield put the hosts ahead in the 17th minute.

Ibrox was bouncing and Rio McFerdinand was celebrating in the BT Sport studio like he was Ally McCoist's more Scottish cousin until Firmino casually headed home a 24th-minute equaliser from a Kostas Tsimikas corner. Liverpool then came out for the second half and made history.

In 130 years of playing fitba, as they call it north of the border, Liverpool had never scored six goals in one half of an away game. So those travelling Kopites in the corner of the Broomloan Stand got to see something nobody had witnessed before.

Firmino made it 2-1 with a slide-rule finish from a Joe Gomez cross and then produced an outrageous Rabona assist for Nunez to stroke a low curler into the bottom corner. It was Darwin's last touch as Klopp brought on Salah, Thiago, Robertson and Jota for the final 20 minutes or so, not that many of the home support stayed to see everything that followed.

Jota won a tackle to feed Salah, who prodded the ball home. Four-one. Jota again fed Salah, who ran at the Gers' defence, stopped the ball dead on the edge of the box and clipped it into the bottom corner like he was taking a free-kick. Five-one. And then Jota again fed Salah, who curled the ball in off the inside of the post.

Six-one and, at six minutes and 12 seconds, the quickest hat-trick in Champions League history from Liverpool's all-time leading Champions League goalscorer.

Moment of the night, however, came when Harvey Elliott fired home his first Champions League goal only to be flagged offside. VAR had a look and, as the wait for a decision dragged on, Salah stood with his arms draped around the teenager like a proud dad waiting for a good set of GCSE results to be announced. The goal stood and, just as soon as he got Mo off his back, Elliott ran back to the travelling Kop to celebrate.

Seven-one was the second biggest away European win in Liverpool's history, although BT Sport didn't show how Ferdinand reacted to the Reds' seven goals for some reason.







There was no time to dwell on such matters, however, as Manchester City were due in L4 next. With the Reds struggling for Premier League form and Erling Haaland scoring goals like a Norwegian Dixie Dean there were some wild predictions of what would transpire.

"I don't see how Liverpool are going to stop them from scoring at least two goals," said Paul Merson. Chris Sutton went even further. "Pep Guardiola's side scored four at Anfield in February 2021, and I think they will match that," he told BBC Sport while predicting a 4-1 City win. "I almost went for them to get five, which City last managed there in 1937, but either way this will be a walloping."

Turns out the position of Nostradamus of Norwich remains unfilled. Liverpool 1 Manchester City 0 was the heart-pumping, tub-thumping, spirit-lifting, season-refreshing victory that, in truth, we've probably all needed to see and experience since Paris (and if you didn't see Layla Wright's excellent *Panorama* investigation into what truly happened at the Stade de France and can face reliving it, you'll find it on BBC iPlayer).

Virgil van Dijk and Joe Gomez marshalled Haaland magnificently and Alisson dealt with the few chances he did get. The turning-point came when Ederson denied Salah in a one-v-one, but ref Anthony Taylor awarded a goal-kick. From it, Phil Foden scored despite Haaland fouling Fabinho and kicking the ball out of Ali's hands in the build-up.

VAR official Darren England sent Taylor to the monitor, he belatedly spotted Haaland trying to rip Fabinho's shirt off and disallowed the goal, sending Guardiola in a cheerleader-esque frenzy as he waved his hands at the Main Stand. Amid the cacophony, Jota headed Salah's cross wide, but a goal was coming.

Alisson fired a long pass that the forward-running Salah controlled while turning Joao Cancelo in one movement before racing through and lifting the ball over Ederson. The noise levels when the ball went in were exceptional, but when assistant referee Gary Beswick somehow missed Bernardo Silva manhandling Salah right in front of his nose, Klopp protested too strongly and was sent off.

Meanwhile, Nunez was on and spent the final 20 minutes causing havoc with his powerful running. He missed one chance, wasted another when he should have passed and almost teed up Alexander-Arnold for a second in a rip-snorting cameo. It mattered not. Liverpool one, City none.

"The red card – I lost it in that moment and that is not okay, but how can you not whistle that foul?" said Klopp. "We deserved the three points with a really, really exceptional performance."

The following day Salah finished fifth as the Ballon d'Or went to Karim Benzema and Alisson was runner-up to Thibaut Courtois for the Yashin Trophy goalkeeper award, but ahead of the midweek game against West Ham it was the Anfield atmosphere that the players were still processing.

"The noise, the support, the fervour – they were all off the scale," wrote Henderson in his matchday programme column. "I don't mind admitting that this kind of atmosphere is unbelievably addictive. Once you have experienced it, you want it more and more, especially when you see the positive effect it can have on our team and our results."

Liverpool 1 West Ham 0 was an 'after the Lord Mayor's Show' kinda night, but how good was it to see Nunez silence the 'You're just a **** Andy Carroll' chants by heading home the first-half winner in front of the travelling Hammers?

It needed a brilliant penalty save by Alisson from Jarrod Bowen and a last-ditch block from James Milner to extend David Moyes' winless Anfield run to 19 visits – and the pre-match news that the muscle injury Jota suffered late on against City would sideline him long-term was another major kick in the proverbials – but grinding out 1-0 wins has never been a bad thing.





Being on the end of such a 1-0 defeat, however, is much less enjoyable. The frustrating loss at Nottingham Forest made it 13 games without a league win at the City Ground, dating back to 1984.

Ex-Red Taiwo Awoniyi got the only goal, most of the chances Liverpool missed came from set-pieces and while it was great to see Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain back, it wasn't half deflating to lose another away game. Thiago missing out due to an ear infection that needed hospital treatment somehow seemed par for the course.

Also, is our away kit cursed or what? Because when Liverpool finally donned their 'atomic teal' third strip in Amsterdam the scoreline was very different.

Ahead of playing Ajax, and with Naby Keita back in training, Academy kids Kyle Kelly and Lee Jonas signed new contracts and 16-year-old Ben Doak scored the winner on his U21s debut in the mini-Derby against Everton.

Coming on the back of Calvin Ramsay scoring in his comeback game for the U21s in the Papa John's Trophy at Accrington Stanley (who are they?) it was a reminder that we've got some bright young talent developing.

Back to Amsterdam and while the excellent home supporters were thinking every little thing gonna be all right when Steven Berghuis hit the post early on, Liverpool weathered the storm and took the lead – Salah beautifully lifting the ball over Ajax goalie Remko Pasveer from an exquisite Henderson pass.

Nunez then continued his mission to seemingly be as unpredictable as compatriot Luis Suarez was by missing a sitter before gloriously heading home an Andy Robbo corner. When Elliott rattled in a quick-fire third, Ajax must have wished it was foggy like in 1966. A 3-0 win put Liverpool into the Champions League last 16 with a game to spare, which seemed unlikely at 4-1 down in Naples.

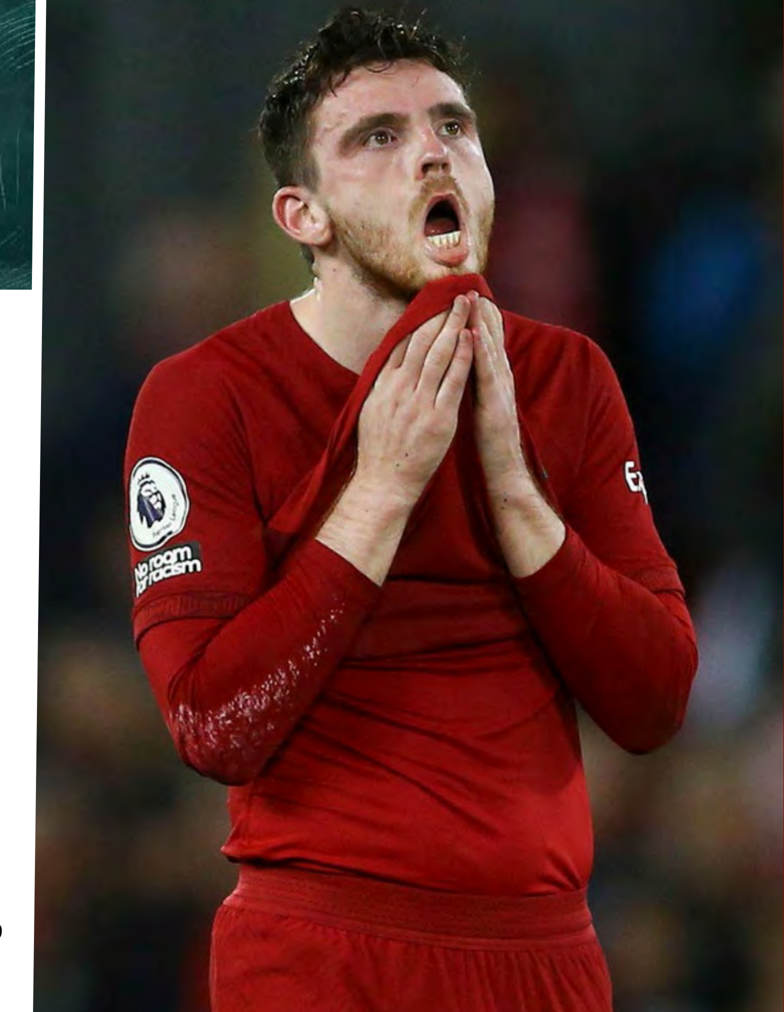
And so, with the scariest time of year approaching

– that's six weeks without a Liverpool game due to the World Cup rather than Halloween – October ended with a frightfully bad Saturday night defeat against Leeds United at Anfield, thus ending a 29-game unbeaten home league run and Virgil van Dijk's incredible record of having never lost an Anfield Premier League game in 70 appearances as a Red. Unfortunately, if you're going to give goals away like the one presented to Rodrigo and not be clinical in front of goal, defeats will follow.

"So many things are unlike us in this moment," said Klopp. "I am sorry it is like this, but that is the situation. I am not sure how deep you can dig, but we will."

While he might need a mechanical digger rather than a spade given Liverpool's Premier League inconsistencies, if there's anyone who can dig us out of this hole it is Jürgen Klopp.

But maybe the looming six-week World Cup break isn't a bad thing after all…



WHAT'S ON

NOV/DEC





WOMEN'S HOUR

While the men's team take a domestic fixture-break for the FIFA World Cup in Qatar, Liverpool FC Women have a busy spell before Christmas. Coach Matt Beard's side are in Barclays Women's Super League action at Brighton and Hove Albion on Sunday 20 November and Reading FC Women on Thursday 24 November before beginning a sequence of four home games in just over a fortnight.

It all begins when Blackburn Rovers visit Prenton Park for a Continental Tyres League Cup tie on Sunday 27 November (2pm) before the Reds receive Beard's former club West Ham United for a league fixture seven days later (2pm).

There is more League Cup action on offer on Wednesday 7 December when Manchester City are the visitors (7pm) before the Reds round things off for the first half of their 2022/23 campaign with a league game against Leicester City on Sunday 11 December (2pm).

"It's a busy spell for us but hopefully it's a good opportunity to attract some new fans while the men's World Cup is taking place," says Beard. "I would encourage anyone who hasn't been to see the women play to get themselves to Tranmere and get behind the team!"

Ticket details for all fixtures are available by visiting liverpoolfc.com.





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NOV/DEC

WHAT'S ON



DERBY DATE FOR UNDER-18S

Liverpool's Under-18s make the short trip to Halewood on Saturday 26 November when they visit Everton for a Premier League U18s North clash.

The first mini-derby of the season at that age group will see coach Marc Bridge-Wilkinson's side visit the Blues' Finch Farm training complex for an 11am kick-off.

The Under-18s programme continues during the men's FIFA World Cup and the young Reds kick-off their December programme with a home game against Sunderland at the Kirkby Academy a week later with the match set to get underway at 12.30pm.

ALL THOSE YEARS AGO...

ANNIVERSARIES

15 years since the Reds put eight past Besiktas in a Champions League group game at Anfield on 6 November 2007.

40 years since Ian Rush put four past Everton in a famous 5-0 win at Goodison Park on 6 November 1982.

52 years since big John Toshack joined Shankly's Reds from Cardiff City on 11 November 1970.

55 years since Liverpool put eight past TSV Munich in a European Fairs Cup tie on 7 November 1967.

7 years since the Reds won 4-1 at Manchester City to claim their first away win under Jürgen Klopp on 21 November 2015.

70 years since the great Ronnie Moran made his Liverpool debut on 22 November 1952.

And it's 76 years since Jack Balmer scored a hat-trick of consecutive hat-tricks on 23 November 1946…

Manchester City's Erling Haaland hit the headlines recently when he scored Premier League hat-tricks in three successive home games. However, in Liverpool's post-war title winning season of 1946/47, West Derby-born forward Jack Balmer achieved the feat of hat-tricks in three consecutive fixtures, home and away!

The moustachioed marksman terrorised defenders on three successive Saturdays in November 1946 as manager George Kay's Reds picked up important points against Portsmouth, Derby County and Arsenal.

It all started in relatively low-key fashion against Pompey at Anfield on 9 November when Balmer's treble gave Liverpool a 3-0 victory,

A week later the Reds visited Derby County and captain Jack wrote more headlines with a hat-trick inside six minutes either side of half-time at the Baseball Ground. For good measure he also added a fourth as Liverpool ran out 4-1 winners to move above Wolves and reach the summit of the league standings.

Seven days later, Arsenal were at Anfield and the interest of the crowd was naturally piqued when the 30-year-old scored twice in just over an hour.

"All that was needed now was a Balmer goal to make three hat-tricks in succession," reported the Liverpool Echo. "No sooner had the words been spoken than [Harry] Eastham started the run which produced an angled chance for Balmer, who veered to the right, and put the ball into the net to the biggest cheer Anfield has ever known in its long history. He was mobbed by his delighted team-mates."

Balmer's feat remains unique in Liverpool FC's history. He became the third player to score a hat-trick of consecutive hat-tricks in the top division, following Tottenham's Tom Jennings in 1925 and Leeds United's Frank Osborne in 1926.

BIRTHDAYS

John Barnes 59 on 7 November

Adam Lewis 23 on 8 November

Patrik Berger 49 on 10 November

Ron Yeats 85 on 12 November

Billy Koumetio 20 on 14 November

Bobby Graham 78 on 22 November

Caoimhin Kelleher 24 on 23 November

Jim Furnell 85 on 23 November

Steve Heighway 75 on 25 November

Xabi Alonso 41 on 25 November

Phil Babb 52 on 30 November

Diogo Jota 26 on 4 December





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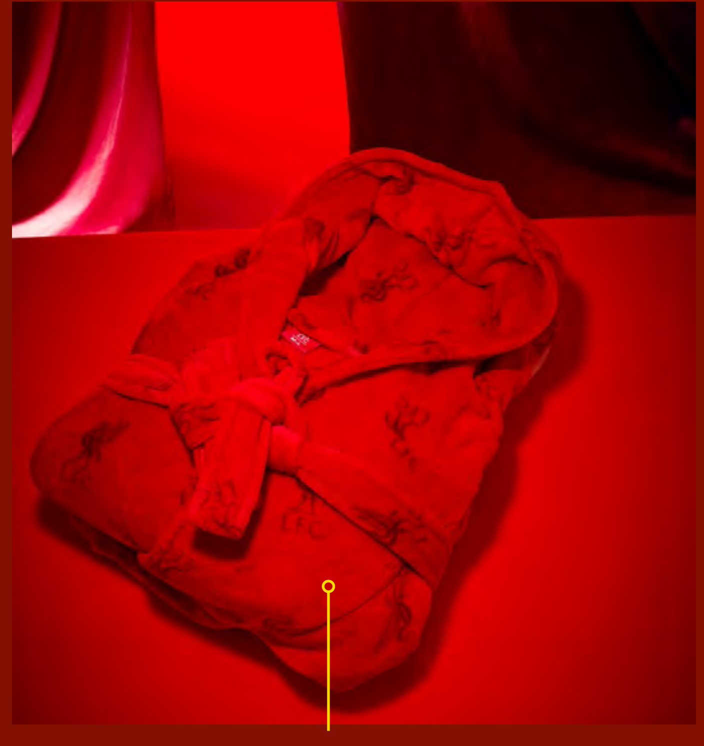


FIXTURES 2022/23

			KO	TV	SCORE	SCORERS
JULY						
30	Manchester City (Community Shield)	N	5pm	itv	3-1	Alexander-Arnold, Salah (pen), Nunez
AUGUST						
6	Fulham	A	12.30pm	BT	2-2	Nunez, Salah
15	**Crystal Palace**	**H**	**8pm**	**Sky**	**1-1**	**Diaz**
22	Manchester United	A	8pm	Sky	1-2	Salah
27	**Bournemouth**	**H**	**3pm**		**9-0**	**Diaz 2, Elliott, Alexander-Arnold, Firmino 2, van Dijk, Mepham og, Carvalho**
31	**Newcastle United**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**	**2-1**	**Firmino, Carvalho**
SEPTEMBER						
3	Everton	A	12.30pm	BT	0-0	
7	Napoli (UCL M1)	A	8pm	BT	1-4	Diaz
13	**Ajax (UCL M2)**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**	**2-1**	**Salah, Matip**
OCTOBER						
1	**Brighton**	**H**	**3pm**		**3-3**	**Firmino 2, Webster og**
4	**Rangers (UCL M3)**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**	**2-0**	**Alexander-Arnold, Salah (pen)**
9	Arsenal	A	4.30pm	Sky	2-3	Nunez, Firmino
12	Rangers (UCL M4)	A	8pm	BT	7-1	Firmino 2, Nunez, Salah 3, Elliott
16	**Manchester City**	**H**	**4.30pm**	**Sky**	**1-0**	**Salah**
19	**West Ham**	**H**	**7.30pm**	**AP**	**1-0**	**Nunez**
22	Nottm Forest	A	12.30pm	BT	0-1	
26	Ajax (UCL M5)	A	8pm	BT	3-0	Salah, Nunez, Elliott
29	**Leeds United**	**H**	**7.45pm**	**Sky**	**1-2**	**Salah**
NOVEMBER						
1	**Napoli (UCL M6)**	**H**	**8pm**	**BT**	**2-0**	**Salah, Nunez**
6	Tottenham	A	4.30pm	Sky		
9	**Derby County (Carabao Cup 3)**	**H**	**8pm**			
12	**Southampton**	**H**	**3pm**			
DECEMBER						
20/21	Carabao Cup 4					
26	Aston Villa	A	5.30pm	AP		
30	**Leicester City**	**H**	**8pm**	**Sky**		
JANUARY						
2	Brentford	A	5.30pm	Sky		
7	Emirates FA Cup 3					
10/11	Carabao Cup Q-F					
14	Brighton	A	3pm			
21	**Chelsea**	**H**	**3pm**			
25	Carabao Cup S-F 1					
28	Emirates FA Cup 4					
FEBRUARY						
1	Carabao Cup S-F 2					
4	Wolves	A	3pm			
11	**Everton**	**H**	**3pm**			
14/15	UEFA Champions League R16 1					
18	Newcastle	A	3pm			
21/22	UEFA Champions League R16 1					
25	Crystal Palace	A	3pm			
26	Carabao Cup final	N				
MARCH						
1	Emirates FA Cup 5					
4	**Manchester United**	**H**	**3pm**			
7/8	UEFA Champions League R16 2					
11	Bournemouth	A	3pm			
14/15	UEFA Champions League R16 2					
18	**Fulham**	**H**	**3pm**			
18	Emirates FA Cup Q-F					
APRIL						
1	Manchester City	A	3pm			
8	**Arsenal**	**H**	**3pm**			
11/12	UEFA Champions League Q-F 1					
16	Leeds United	A	3pm			
18/19	UEFA Champions League Q-F 2					
22	**Nottm Forest**	**H**	**3pm**			
22/23	Emirates FA Cup S-F	N				
25	West Ham	A	7.45pm			
29	**Tottenham**	**H**	**3pm**			
MAY						
6	**Brentford**	**H**	**3pm**			
9/10	UEFA Champions League S-F 1					
13	Leicester City	A	3pm			
16/17	UEFA Champions League S-F 2					
20	**Aston Villa**	**H**	**3pm**			
28	Southampton	A	4pm			
JUNE						
3	Emirates FA Cup final	N				
10	UEFA Champions League final	N				
TBC	**Wolves**	**H**				
TBC	Chelsea	A		Sky		

All fixtures are subject to change

WHAT'S IN



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ADULT HOLIDAY JUMPER
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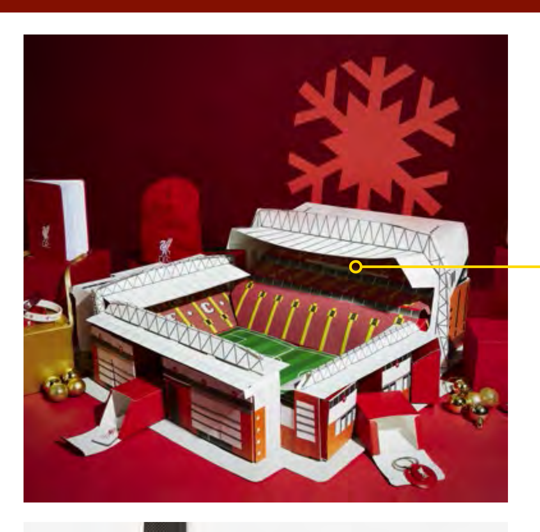
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NEIL MELLOR

The World Cup in Qatar comes at a good time for Liverpool – it will give several players a chance of getting closer to fitness and some time for Jürgen Klopp to evaluate what he needs if he wants to strengthen the squad

Jürgen Klopp has managed Liverpool Football Club in 400 matches. It is an unbelievable milestone for any manager to achieve at a club as big as Liverpool. When you think about some of the managers we have had over the years and the success they brought to Anfield it is also a huge achievement that Klopp deserves to be talked about in the same breath as Shankly, Paisley and co.

He took over the football club in October 2015 and we all wanted to believe him when he said he hoped to change mindsets from doubters to believers, but because of what we'd gone through for so long I think a lot of Reds thought: really, he can do that?

True to his word, he turned Liverpool into one of the best teams in the world by playing a brand of football that has been absolutely brilliant and winning seven different trophies – including the big two of Champions League and Premier League – along the way. He made Liverpool successful again.

The majority of Liverpool's transformation has been down to Jürgen's personality and charisma. He created a togetherness and a connection at the football club that made Liverpool supporters feel part of everything.

Creating that connection is incredibly difficult at any club, but Klopp managed to do it and used the support and belief of Liverpool supporters to inspire his team. I'm not just talking at Anfield on matchdays but fans around the world. Everyone has felt part of Klopp's Liverpool because he created an atmosphere of enjoyment.

That goes for the players too. He turned top players like Mo Salah and Sadio Mane into world-class players and Virgil van Dijk from a top-class centre-half into the best in the world.

Every player is different and a top coach understands each individual player's needs. We're in an era where football has changed and players like to be told they are doing well, such as with a hug. Jürgen is the manager who personifies that culture and when I see him hug a player I think: I'd love to be that player.

I played under Rafa Benitez at Liverpool and Rafa had a very different way of doing things. If he was happy you'd get a little smile. That's all it'd be. There'd be no big hugs, but a smile meant you'd done well for him.

The love Jürgen shows is obvious and that's a big part of his personality, something we'd already seen when he was at Borussia Dortmund. He was this big animated character on the touchline who made me think: I'd love to play for him. Now we've seen how his personality can transform things at Liverpool and it can continue to do so.

No club has it easy and Liverpool are going through a challenging time. Whatever reasons you want to put it down to – injuries, conceding the first goal, not being clinical – Liverpool have not reached their levels of previous seasons.

It's a challenge for the manager but one he will put right. He won't panic despite being in a difficult situation because, as he showed a few seasons ago when the squad was decimated through injury and football was played behind-closed-doors due to COVID, he can turn things around. He got us back into the top four that season and then last year we almost won the quadruple.

This season is different due to the World Cup kicking off in November. I don't like the timing of it, I don't like having a World Cup during the season and I don't agree with it, but I think it comes at a good time for Liverpool.

It will give several players a chance of getting closer to fitness and by the time it ends we'll be less than two weeks away from the January transfer-window, giving time for Klopp to evaluate what he needs if he wants to strengthen the squad.

So I think it gives Liverpool a chance to have a breather after a lot of games without key players, the flip-side being not knowing if any of our players will return from Qatar feeling jaded, mentally tired or injured.

That worry aside, I think we can all look forward to the second half of the season when the Premier League resumes on Boxing Day. It gives Liverpool the opportunity to start afresh, to try to build a new momentum and show, as in previous years, how strong and consistent they can be in the second half of the season.

We're through in the Champions League and if players and supporters alike return after Christmas with the mentality of giving it everything on the pitch and backing the team off it then, with Jürgen Klopp in charge, there will be plenty to be optimistic about in the second half of season 2022/23.

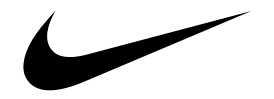


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